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Homebuilding & Renovating

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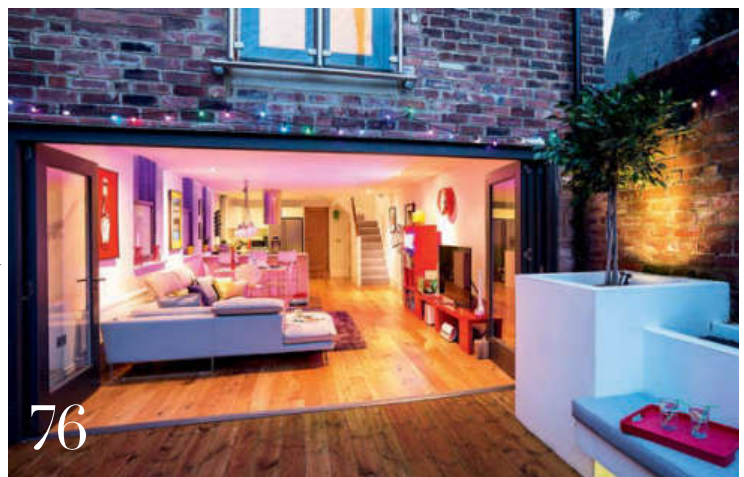
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Homebuilding &Renovating

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Smart Ways to Keep Warm

**Jason Orme is the Editor of
*Homebuilding & Renovating***

Heating your home — it's not what it used to be. Of all of the things that have got more complicated in building or renovating homes over the years, it's the heating system that causes us most indecision. This month we're looking in detail at two of the more mainstream options for self-builders and renovators: underfloor heating (p.130) and woodburning stoves (p.116). Both have become almost standard choices in our building projects in recent years, but there are an awful lot of choices to make when buying both. How do you get the decisions right? By getting our expert help, of course. We answer your questions, in depth, on both in this issue.

Elsewhere, we take a good look at how to deal successfully with builders' merchants. As a layperson they can be quite intimidating places — our expert guide



(p.125) shows you how to approach getting the best price, and be treated in the same way as builders are.

Planning ahead is key to any successful project and in no place more so than the bathroom — deciding your layouts, plumbing, lighting and electrics runs at the last minute will almost certainly result in failure. So, give yourself a chance of getting it right by reading Claire Lloyd's comprehensive, engaging guide to planning a bathroom from scratch (p.157). As David Snell says of the five Ps: "Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance." **H**

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Jason Orme is currently rebuilding a 1960s house (described as 'Frank Lloyd Wrong' by HB&R's Contributing Editor Mark Brinkley) and is an experienced self-builder and renovator

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UPFRONT

DESIGN DIGEST

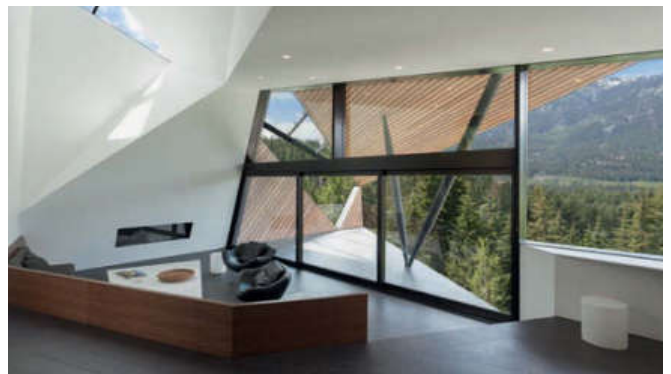
The latest house design ideas and news from around the world



Mountain View

Located on a slope overlooking a panoramic view of Whistler Valley in south-west British Columbia, you'd be forgiven for thinking this jaw-dropping home, designed by Patkau Architects, was a James Bond villain's lair. Constructed from a hybrid of monolithic and framed systems, the slabs and walls which enclose the lower floor are concrete, while the upper levels are made of a composite steel and a heavy timber structure with wood frame infill, and the exterior clad in ipe. The roof form has been designed so as to shed snow.

Internally, the main level is essentially one large space with living, dining and kitchen areas and an outdoor deck, all of which open up to the valley view. A bridge crosses the staircase on the upper level, connecting the master bedroom suite and study, and on the lowest level are the more intimate spaces housing guest bedrooms and a second living area.



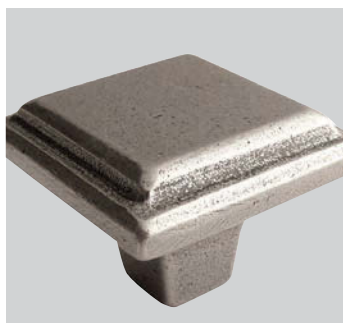
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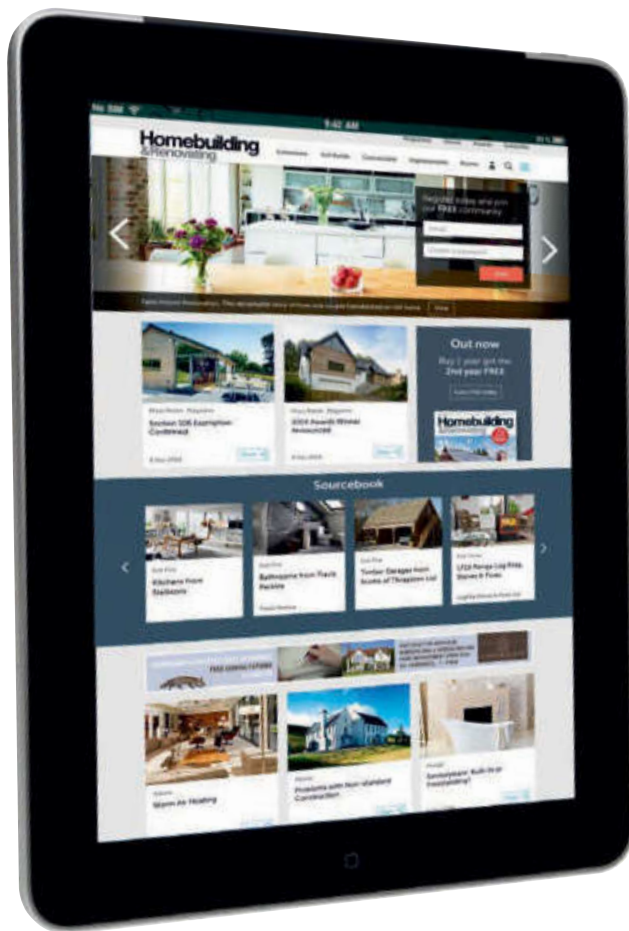
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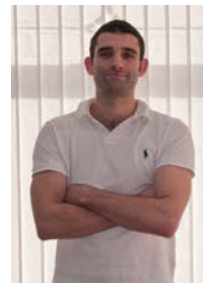
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“Luck Appeared to have Run Out”

We catch up with self-builder Joe Shimbart, who's building an energy-efficient oak frame house in Hampshire using natural materials



Following the successful hempcreteing, the plan was to cover the roof and allow the hempcrete to dry. The studwork at the front of the house and final parts of the roof structure were completed and the breathable roofing felt and battens were all on site ready to go. The wood-fibre sarking boards were due to arrive imminently, but then the phone rang. There had been an incident involving both pallets of wood-fibre boards and a forklift truck — all of the 156 boards had been damaged beyond use; the tongues on the ends of the boards had been snapped and crushed.

The supplier was extremely apologetic and did all they could to resolve the situation as soon as possible. However, luck appeared to have run out with further problems at Calais port causing severe delays — my roof boards were stuck in Europe. The planned building work could not proceed and the roof had to wait.

The rain then arrived and turned the plot into a bog and the house into an indoor swimming pool. Fortunately though, the hempcrete having had weeks of dry weather was thankfully unaffected by the rain. Site foreman Jack Webb took the initiative and after some brief discussion with myself, ordered the timbers and we started to construct the large garage and link space for the house. **For more updates on Joe's project, visit homebuilding.co.uk/blogs**



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UPFRONT

MATERIALS

Latest looks for finishes and fittings



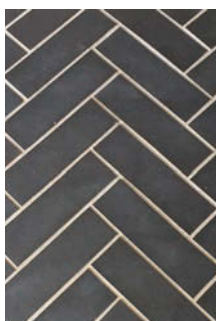
Frontline's Stone Bath

New to Frontline Bathroom's Aquabathe range, the free-standing resin Stone Bath measures 1,700x800mm and features a deep, slimline design — the thermal properties of the stone also means the bath retains heat. The bath costs £1,795 (the Ixos Free-standing Bath Shower Mixer also shown costs £495).



MGS Black Steel Single Lever Mixer Tap from Grange Designs

Made of high-quality stainless steel, the new MGS Black Steel Single Lever Basin Mixer Tap, available from distributor Grange Designs, is deck-mounted and features a hidden aerator along with precision single lever control and universal pop-up waste. Designed with a statement curved spout, the tap is 180mm high. It's available in a Matt or Gloss Black Steel finish and costs from £898.



Staffordshire Blue Quarry Tiles from Ketley Brick

Frost proof, highly durable and maintenance free, these real clay Staffordshire Blue quarry tiles from Ketley Brick work well both indoors and outside to create traditional and contemporary spaces. Prices start from £30/m² plus VAT.

Top Towel Warmers



1. The new KEYS II Towel Warmer from Vogue (UK)'s Contemporary Collection is crafted in high-quality mild steel and has a polished chrome mirror finish. It costs from £371

2. The contemporary Beams radiator with towel bar from Vasco costs £780



Origin's Twin Flush Casement Window

Offering slim sight lines thanks to the aluminium frames — a mere 50mm from the glass — the new twin flush casement window from Origin is capable of reaching a Window Energy Rating (WER) of A+21 due to its high-performance thermal break. Both the frames and handles are available in a range of colours. POA.

New Terracotta Artisan Tiles from Surface

Handmade in Portugal using traditional techniques, New Terracotta is the latest collection of made-to-order glazed terracotta tiles from Surface. The tiles within the range are available in 46 colours (shown here in Mystery Teal Explosion) and specialist artisan techniques have been used to create nine finishes including metallic, crackle and oxide effects. The New Terracotta tiles come in 11 sizes, as well as various shapes and a range of décor textured patterns for added versatility. Prices start from £183.82/m².





SCAN DANISH HEATING IDEAS

FIRE, SHAPE AND COLOUR

This year Scan has added a number of new colours to the Scan 83 series: metallic brown, glossy red, black and white and classic grey paint.

The range of colours is available in versions Scan 83-1, 83-2, 83-3 and 83-4, with grey paint being available for the entire range of the Scan 83 series.

Combine your favourite colour with trim and handles in black or aluminium.



"By making the stove design simple, each user can individually express themselves with the details"

Nicolai Sørensen

Thomas Harrit

THE LATEST

Events, news, tips and ephemera

Turn Your Build Project Dreams into Reality at HB&R's South-West Show

Perfect for anyone building or renovating their own home, the South-West Homebuilding and Renovating Show at the Bath and West Showground in Somerset has everything you need to get your project underway.

Whether you're just getting started and need planning or design advice, or if you're mid-way through a project and are looking to source products from the industry's leading suppliers, the Show is an essential day out.

If that wasn't enough, you can pick up key tips from those in the know at the masterclasses and seminars running throughout each day, and even book in free 15 minute consultations with independent experts to discuss everything from finding a plot, to finance, green technologies, self-build, renovation and extensions, and much more — plus book in with the planners in the Planning Clinic, and bring your plans and ideas along to discuss with the architects on the Ask the Expert stand.



The South-West Show runs the weekend of 21 to 22 November. For more information about the event and to book your tickets, visit somersehomebuildingshow.co.uk

Eco-House Builder App Aids Children's Learning



Offering a fun and educational game for children, the Eco-House Builder App allows the user to build a variety of eco-friendly houses on an iPad while learning about sustainable building techniques.

The App takes the user through each build stage, explaining which materials are better in order to protect the environment, with a building inspector signing off each stage and awarding eco points, which are turned into money for buying eco gadgets at the end of the game.


"The purpose of Eco-House Builder is to engage and educate children in an entertaining way," explains the App's creator Natalie Kober. "It can be used by teachers as a learning aid, as it complements the National Curriculum by covering a variety of themes, including the benefits of building sustainably, recycling and protecting the environment, and by using rhyming words and including a dictionary of new words for them to learn. It also features bonus questions to further the user's understanding of the building process and environment." The App is available for £0.99p and is downloadable through iTunes.

NaCSBA's Self Build on a Shoestring 2015 Competition Winner Announced

After receiving more than 30 entries from across the World, the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has announced that architect Niall Maxwell from Rural Office for Architecture has won the £5,000 prize in their Self Build on a Shoestring 2015 competition, and was presented with his cheque by Kevin McCloud at the Grand Designs Live exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham on 8 October.



With the competition brief requiring entrants to design a flexible starter home that could be easily constructed for just £40,000, could adapt over time, be environmentally friendly, and look good, Niall's winning design was an easy-to-assemble, flat-pack home made of 18mm plywood sections. "Think of it as the building equivalent of flat-pack furniture, but with the added benefits of future extension, alteration or relocation," says Niall. The system is easily assembled by two people, is affordable, thermally efficient and can be clad in a range of materials.

"This innovative £40K home is as elegant in its engineering as it is in its architecture, conceived to be easily manufactured off-site, constructed quickly and adapted or even relocated in the future," says Michael Holmes, Chair of NaCSBA. "This bespoke home concept could meet the aspirations of 10,000s seeking high-quality, affordable, sustainable homes all over the UK." 

ERRATUM: In our June 2015 issue, we forgot to mention Monica Catania of HTC Arquitectos as the architect of the Eqohouse case study. Apologies.



All I want for Christmas is...



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Home

This section: Everything you need to create a brilliant individual home — from ideas, expert guides and designers' advice to other people's inspiring projects



Homes:

A Contemporary Self-build P.62



Homes:

A Remodelled Coach House P.76



Homes:

A Modern Open Plan Home P.22

- Plus:**
- Family Home Design Guide P.34
 - Quick Ideas for Front Doors P.44
 - Home Office Design Masterclass P.57
 - Exterior Makeover Inspiration P.72

PROJECT NOTES

Project:

Contemporary-style
self-build

Location:

Buckinghamshire

Dates:

April 13
- May 14

Size:

170m²

Plot cost:

£302,000

Build cost:

£270,000

(£1,588/m²)

Value:

£675,000

Exterior

The house design draws inspiration from traditional longhouses, and uses low-maintenance materials throughout. New clay tiles (from Marley Eternit) were used for the roof and are mellowing with age, while the Scottish larch cladding is gradually weathering to a silvery grey. The windows and doors are aluminium externally and timber internally, painted the same colour as the exterior frames for a more industrial look.





The Simple Life

Ed and Anna Chipperfield have succeeded in building a new home that marries simple contemporary design with a family-friendly layout

Words: **Natasha Brinsmead** Photography: **Simon Maxwell**

Main Living Spaces

The long open layout of the house was something Ed and Anna were really keen on. The partially polished concrete floor retains so much heat that people think they have underfloor heating. The raw, industrial feel is continued through the birch-faced ply walls, staircase and finishing touches, whilst the huge Velfac windows and double-height hallway bring in plenty of natural light



HOMES SELF-BUILD



THE QUICK READ

➤ Ed and Anna Chipperfield have built a contemporary cabin-style family home in a Conservation Area after successfully negotiating a restrictive covenant on the plot

➤ The Chipperfields worked closely with their architect, Kieran Hawkins of Mailen Design, to create a layout which reflected their love of longhouses and also their ethos of 'keeping things simple'

➤ The finishes of the house have an industrial feel reminiscent of a warehouse conversion, and technology has been kept to a minimum to avoid complicating the build

“**V**iking longhouse meets New York loft apartment.” This is how Ed Chipperfield describes the new home he and wife Anna have built in rural Buckinghamshire. It’s not often you hear a new home described in such a way, but then again this is a house that is surprising on many levels.

After renovating and living in a Victorian house in Oxford, Ed and Anna came to the conclusion that period houses weren’t their ‘thing’, put their house on the market and sold it almost immediately. The Chipperfields found a building plot which had been split into three; Ed and Anna’s parcel of land originally being an orchard on the site. Despite being up against a number of developers, the fact that they had already sold their own house, as well as the owners of the plot planning to still live on part of the original plot themselves, worked in the couple’s favour.

While the plot came with outline permission for a more traditional timber frame house, Ed and Anna knew that they were after a more contemporary design, and although a covenant restricting the house’s height had been placed on the plot – which sits within a Conservation Area – the new design was passed by the planners. ➤





HOUSES SELF-BUILD

A Considered Design

"I like history and I have a bit of a thing about Viking longhouses," explains Ed of the concept behind the new house design. "We have friends with a house on the Isle of Skye and really like the style — they offer an open plan, long but useful space, with the bedrooms located in the eaves (a happy coincidence given that there were planning restrictions on the ridge height of the new building). So that was our influence."

"Anna and I both grew up in the 1980s and were influenced by all those warehouse conversions that were everywhere at the time," continues Ed. "We basically kept pecking away at the original design until we had something we were both happy with — a raw, cabin-like freestanding structure."

The couple chose architect Kieran Hawkins, a friend of the family, from Mailen Design to come up with the design for their new home. "We wanted a young architect with similar ideas to us," explains Ed. "We found that a lot of the local architects we approached only wanted to do conventional things, but Kieran brought a fresh approach to the design."

Kieran takes up the story: "We tried hard to avoid transplanting a slick city house into historic Buckinghamshire. Our aim was to construct a home that had the clarity and strength of an agricultural building while providing an uplifting backdrop to daily life for this particular family."

The result is a house that is both modern and understated, yet incorporates rustic and traditional materials that allow it to blend into its surroundings. It has been clad in Scottish larch which fitted Ed and Anna's ideal of a low-maintenance home; it requires no treatment and has been left to weather to a silver grey.

The Build Process

Structural insulated panels (SIPs) were chosen as the method of construction for the new house, with Ed and Anna keen on the idea of the fast build times they offered as well as the superior thermal performance. "SIPs construction provides excellent environmental performance and allowed the structure to be erected to watertight stage in only one week. The panels were great, but the installers were messy — we had to hire a skip after they left," explains Ed.

"I'd definitely recommend SIPs. The construction was really fast and there were no joists and beams to contend with either, meaning it is a good option for open plan spaces," adds Ed.

The couple employed Les McKeran from Link Development & Groundworks as the main contractor, who worked alongside Ed and Kieran throughout the build. "Les really is one in a million," says Ed. "From day one, if Les said it would happen, it did."

During the relatively short build — the whole project, from conception to moving in took around 10 months — Ed and Anna avoided renting, staying at their friend's cottage on the Isle of Skye for two months and with family for the remaining eight months. "If we did it again, we might rent," reflects Ed. "It would have been ➡"

Above and Left: Ground Floor Spaces

The open plan ground floor allows for light to flood through the spaces while also allowing the couple to keep an eye on their son Jasper, who is five. In the living area a Morsø stove offers a heat source, while Ed's office is divided off this space — he got the idea from industrial spaces where the foreman has an office sectioned off from the main areas



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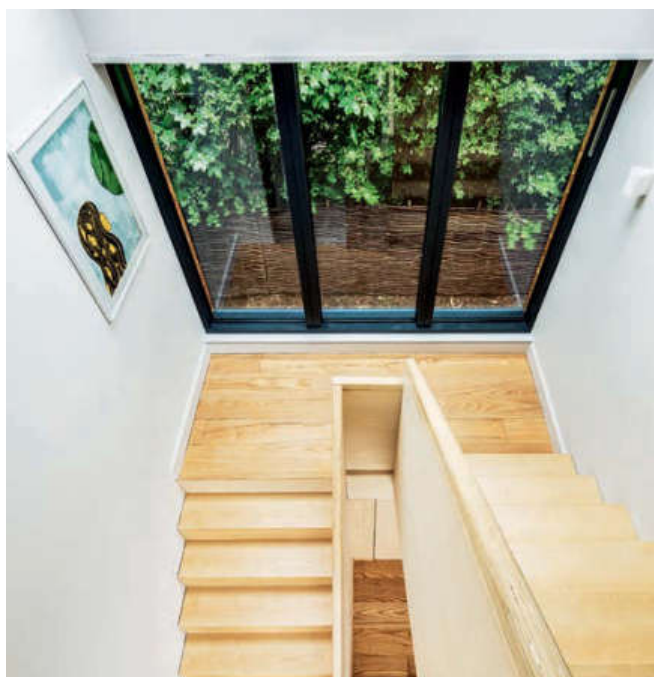
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nice to have been a bit closer to the project at times when decisions were needed fast.”

It was during their time staying with family and friends that Ed and Anna began paring everything down. “Most of our belongings went into storage during the build. When we were ready to move in, we realised that we really hadn’t missed a single thing — so we gave away loads of stuff.”

The Simple Life

Throughout the build, specifications were all based on Ed and Anna’s ethos that: “Each decision you make should move you towards a simpler life.” This ‘simplification’ of their everyday lives is very much reflected in the entire design of the house. Agricultural and industrial finishes have been used throughout, from the partially polished concrete floors and unfinished birch-faced ply details, to the choice of glazing and heating system.

“We considered underfloor heating but decided that it wasn’t worth it,” explains Ed. “The concrete floor has been poured extra thick (around four feet) and provides a huge thermal mass. The windows bathe the concrete floor all day with heat and in the evening they are so warm underfoot that everyone assumes we have underfloor heating anyway.” The house is actually heated via a tiny condensing gas boiler and radiators, and due to the construction, with an additional layer of insulation in the walls, the couple find themselves with heating bills of around just £300 per year.

“We are always open to sustainable ways of doing things,” says Ed, “but we also wanted to get the best value. We looked at solar panels and it didn’t add up. We thought about heat exchangers but they weren’t for us. We craved simplicity and felt that building a house should be as simple as possible — I can’t think of anything ➡

Top and Middle: Kitchen Diner

The IKEA kitchen, like the rest of the house, is minimally fitted out, with a crisp white island unit housing the hob, oven and storage, central to the space. Elsewhere, open ply shelving and a distinct lack of clutter define the room

Left: Double-Height Stairwell

Light floods into the stairwell thanks to the expanse of glazing — overlooking the double-height space are two ‘hatches’ which open out from the master bedroom and Jasper’s room

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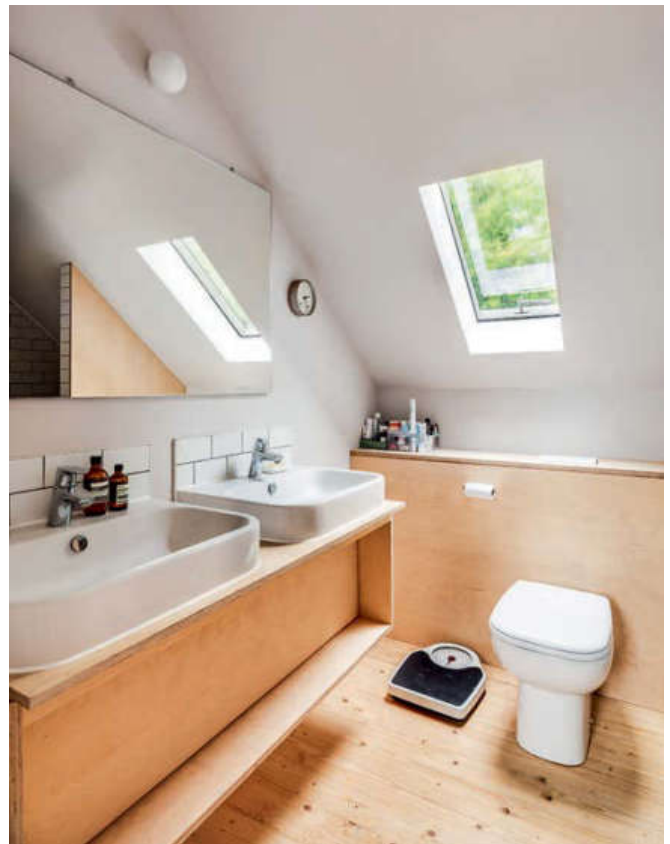
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HOMES SELF-BUILD



worse than having a plant room!” Double as opposed to triple glazing from Velfac has been used throughout as the couple simply didn’t feel the need to overspecify.

Internally, the layout is dominated by one long open plan space which is double-height in places. To break up the open plan arrangement the floor levels have been varied between the kitchen diner and the living area — the living area sits 30cm below ground level, with the step up to the kitchen providing a handy extra place to sit when required.

In fact, this house features many clever design ideas for such an unfussy project. On the ground floor, partitions featuring glass and ply form a separate yet connected home office for Ed, a commercial copywriter, to work from home. Meanwhile on the first floor, two of the three bedrooms feature internal windows that open out over the double-height stairwell providing a nice link between the master bedroom and Jasper’s room. “They are cheeky little things,” says Ed. “We can open them up and let music from our room stream through the whole house — they are also a good way of letting natural light flow through the spaces.”

For much of the raw, clean style that has been achieved throughout the internal spaces, Ed praises their carpenter who crafted all the exposed ply features of the house — including the ingenious birch ply cover for the extractor hood in the kitchen, and the built-in elements that make up the bathroom. “He came up with loads of ideas and we trusted him as he has really good taste.”

Furnished simply with predominantly original mid-century modern furniture (“the house was basically designed to suit our love of this style of furniture,” laughs Ed) the house manages to exude comfort and charm through its individual touches and tailored design features. The finished project is certainly a lesson in pared-down living done well. **H**

Above: First Floor

With the three bedrooms located in the eaves to maximise space on the ground floor, the upper level offers a cosy space to retreat to without feeling cramped. A bridge over the entrance hall connects the master suite with the other bedrooms and family bathroom, and similar raw materials have been used in this area of the home too. The sanitaryware in the master en suite is from Duravit



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The Project



Kieran Hawkins,
Architectural
Director,
Mailen Design
Architect



Ben Mailen,
Managing
Director,
Mailen Design
Architect

ARCHITECTS' VIEW

Anna and Ed were great clients. They gave us guidelines of what they wanted and what they didn't want, but were very open to our ideas as their architects. The final design was the result of a thorough conversation between architect and client to achieve a building that neither of us would have been able to design without the other.

The final design is a contemporary building that was built within the constraints of a conservative outline planning permission. Planning is a political process and is always unpredictable. To satisfy both the local council, who wanted a traditional barn-style cottage, and the clients, who wanted a free-flowing work of modern architecture, was a real achievement and led to a building that is not compromised, but is richer for accommodating these competing demands.

The interiors have a high degree of variety while minimising the number of interior walls to ensure that areas flow into each other, with changes in floor level, double-height spaces and views from one room to another all carefully managed. The split-level design was important to provide a generosity of space and a sense of connection.

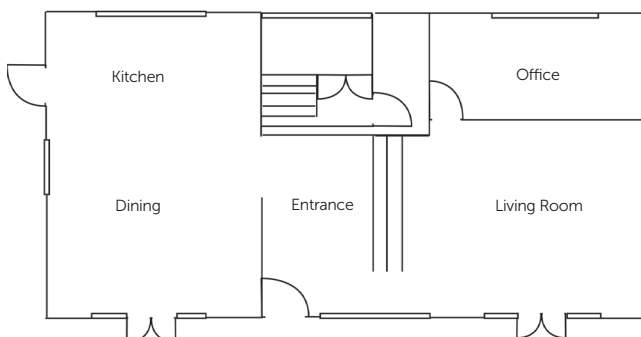
When you enter the house, you are presented with views across the whole ground floor, and upwards to the bedrooms and through the rooflights to the trees and clouds beyond.

The hatches felt right from the first time we sketched them. They allow the clients to enjoy the double-height hallway from their bedrooms and to connect the first floor and ground floor in a way that gives them options of varying privacy levels. They also enable parents and child to talk, play games or read stories without leaving their own rooms.

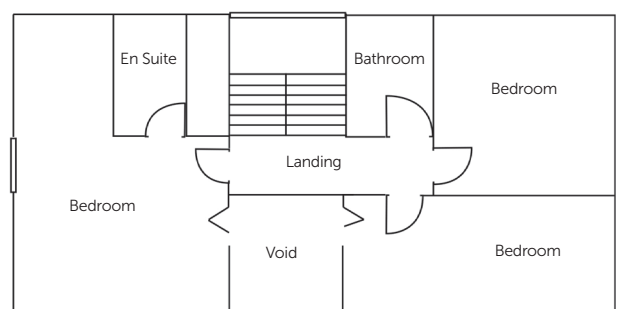
SUPPLIERS

Architect Kieran Hawkins of Mailen Designmailendesign.com; 020 3735 5880
Main contractor, builder, carpenter and concrete flooring Link Development & Groundworks Ltd01869 323140
Birch-faced ply Travis Perkinstravisperkins.co.uk
SIPs and insulation Kingspankingspan.co.uk
Glazing and patio doors Velfac01223 897100
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Ground Floor



First Floor



Family Home

Renovating or building gives you the opportunity to create the perfect home for a growing family. Natasha Brinsmead asks the experts how to get it right ➞



Designing for Children

Architect Matt White uses his basement space to accommodate these brilliant hideaway desks/storage units — going some way to solving the problem of messy playrooms in one go

Design Guide



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Merry Albright
Border Oak
(borderoak.com)

When I'm putting together family space ideas I always think about how my own family functions in real life. For example, a big porch is perfect for putting on wellies without bringing mud into the house, and a spacious hallway works well when the children come home from school and need to dump bags and so on. If you can squeeze a boot room or large cupboard close to the entrance space it makes life a lot easier.

Lots of our clients now ask for open plan floorplans, but we try to investigate if they mean completely open plan or rather a combination of some large, flowing multifunctional spaces mixed with a few more intimate rooms. Large family kitchen/dining/living spaces are still very popular and work really hard throughout the day — but a separate office or playroom can help give some clarity/sanity to life with children. Either you can shut all their mess away in the playroom or you can escape the chaos by hiding away in the office! Even a little niche with a simple desk or a defined corner with a big toy cupboard would work. I would also rather have a utility room and laundry space which is separate to the kitchen/living area.

I like incorporating views through open plan spaces so you can see out of the room itself — on a recent project with an open plan feel we omitted most internal doors and aligned the openings and corridors so you can always see beyond, which is simple but very effective. Another way to add intrigue and a sense of 'beyond' is by including internal windows so you get a glimpse of the space next door. Even gen-

erous rooms can feel enclosed unless you create a sense of journey.

Traditional living rooms are also still popular for family homes — a cosy and well-proportioned room which is separate to the open plan areas.

For us, family homes tend to work best if they are well connected to the outside — in my experience children (and pets) like coming and going. I always try to make sure I can see where the children are from the house — even if it means changing the kitchen layout or adding a longer window somewhere.

Bedrooms are probably less important than the living spaces and in most family homes we build there is typically one vaulted bedroom for the adults but the children's rooms are much simpler, with less oak framing. I guess the trick is to remember that children grow up and so while you might be happy to share a bathroom when they are cute little babies it is probably a less attractive proposition (for both parties) once they reach adolescence!

My husband Ben and I are currently building our own family home and we really wanted to capture a feeling of adventure for the children. We have designed a large open plan kitchen with a 'snug' zone (for watching films as a family) on one side. There is also a utility room, boot room, office and playroom, so we can all happily live and work together. But we have also added a veranda with a swing (perfect for our daydreaming in the sunshine) and secret cupboards that run from one room to another — just for fun. And I am not sure who is more excited by the extra-long handrail that is perfect for sliding down St. Trinian's style — them or us!



Fun and Practical

Homes designed with families in mind have to work well on a practical level, enabling parents to see children where possible. Children's bedrooms don't have to be large, but that shouldn't rule out fun being incorporated

“TRADITIONAL VALUES STILL COUNT”



Traditional values are still very relevant — namely the idea of the kitchen being the heart of the home and the idea of an open fire so the family can congregate and socialise of an evening. With modern-day insulation and more efficient underfloor heating systems, fireplaces are in many places irrelevant — however we always include them as a comforting

point of reference in living spaces. It is about what they represent rather than the heat they give off.

Neil Dawson, Snook Architects
(snookarchitects.com)



Des Ewing
Des Ewing Residential Architects
(desewing.com)

“FORGET THE ESTATE AGENT — HAVE FUN!”

Family homes should be functional, practical, durable, comfortable but also fun! Is that not what having a family is all about? So many of today’s houses are a bit too serious and more concerned with what the next purchasers may think rather than what you would like. I generally find that those who design their houses well for the way they want to live, to suit the family, will find that those coming along next will also love it.

This house (above) which I designed for a client is bright, cheery and inviting. It has a slide which is a daily used short-

cut from the bedrooms to the kitchen table. The sloping site and L-shaped return forms a natural amphitheatre that is used as a basketball court with the wide steps up to the garden acting as tiered seating for the crowd. A zip wire zooms kids from the top of the garden into the house. Sadly the fireman’s pole going from the attic floor to ground was a bit too much for an otherwise cooperative Building Control department.

The kids who live in this house love it. So why not loosen up, forget the estate agent and have some fun!

“A FAMILY HOME MUST HAVE A HEART”

The thing that makes the modern family home has to be the use of flexible open plan space, creating greater social interaction that fits with a 21st-century family. But a great family home must have a heart: the space where everyone gathers on those cold, dark winter evenings, to interact, share the stories and experiences of the day or week.

Flowing open plan spaces that contain living/dining/kitchen plus study are vital for our social discourse, while we cook, eat, watch TV and work. Light is the other key component to a successful family home. It is critical to the wellbeing of the inhabitants.

It’s also really important to design in spaces where members of the family can retreat, switch off and contemplate life. So the snug or secret window seat is vital for those of us who like to escape for some quiet time and switch off from our 24/7 devices.



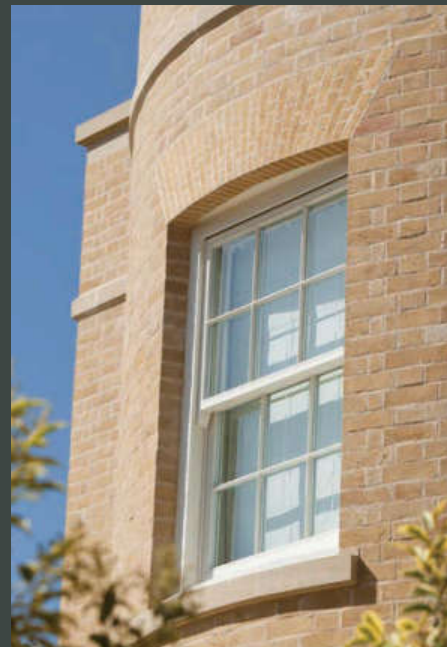
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The Heart of the Home

It’s a classic design cliché, but think about where the family are gathering of an early evening after days at work and school. This might well be in the kitchen — if so, design it with that in mind

Darren Bray, PAD Studio
(padstudio.co.uk)



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Harvey Booth,
Country Manager,
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Smooth floors provide a very practical option for the family home and wood, in particular, is a great option. As well as a natural look that's warm, tactile and healthy, wood is very easy to look after. There's nowhere for dirt and dust to hide, and it can be kept spotlessly by vacuuming and cleaning with a well-wrung mop.

For a busy, family home, a rustic wood design in a mid-toned shade will disguise foot and paw prints. It's worth investing in a quality, branded floor with a durable lacquer or oiled pre-finish, as the construction and finish will be superior. If you choose an oiled floor, you will need to periodically replenish the surface treatment but this will effectively top-up the protection. Many treatments can be added to water, so can be applied really easily with a mop, and don't forget finishing accessories like beading and skirtings — they can make a real difference to the finished look and many ranges now include options that match floors for a seamless installation and transition between rooms.

“ADJUSTABLE SHOWERS ARE IDEAL FOR KIDS”



Joanne Savage,
Aqualisa Brand &
Design Director
(aqualisa.co.uk)

While most bathrooms are small and lack natural light, you can create a restful space even in the busiest family bath or shower room — it's all about creating the illusion of space and light.

Be sure to keep it minimal. Banish clutter, choose fittings with clean lines to create a sense of space. Go for a shower with concealed pipes for a spa look, whether it's over the bath or in a separate enclosure. Consider a shower with a bath fill to eliminate the need for taps.

Technology makes life easier and creates a streamlined look. Digital showers are super safe for all the family with push button controls and no fiddly levers. Choose a divert design to cater for everyone, a drencher head for a relaxing soak plus a hand-held adjustable shower for a quick pre-school splash. Adjustable showers are also ideal for kids of different heights. Switch between the two heads at the touch of a button and you can programme your preferred outlet to start first. Look for the functions that make life easier such as remote control, pause and timer features.

Lighting is very important in bathroom design but often overlooked. Go for dimmable lighting that you can change according to your mood and time of day. **H**



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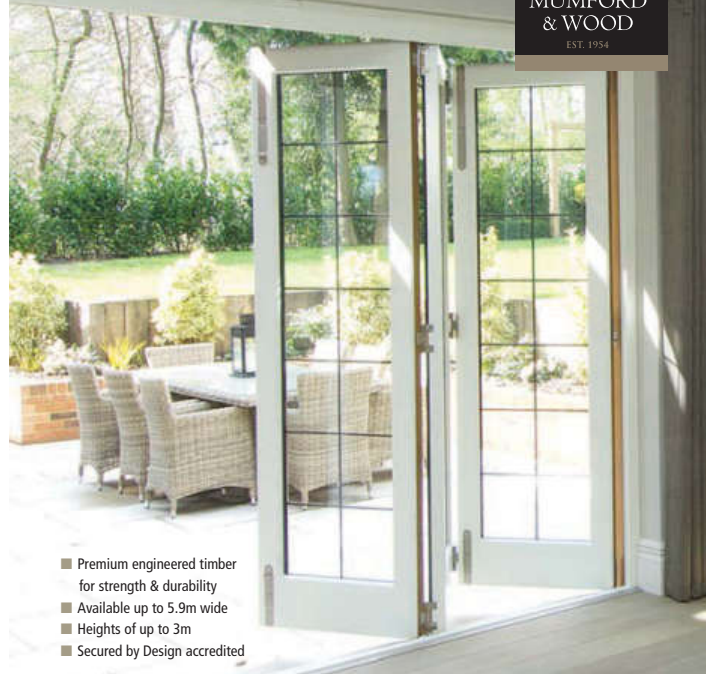


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Front Doors: The Five-Minute Expert

We're placing a lot more importance on our front doors these days, with varying sizes and styles. Natasha Brinsmead explains how to choose

Timber Options

Although timber remains the most widely used material for front doors, due to its natural beauty and ability to suit any style of house, issues with twisting and warping and their tendency to stick when the weather changes can be a problem. There is also some degree of maintenance required to keep them looking good. Choosing a hardwood, or a product such as hemlock – a sturdy North American softwood – will lessen, although not eliminate, the chances of movement. Among the best options for a fully stable timber door is to choose an engineered timber, consisting of smaller sections of wood that have been glued together at angles to one another to reduce movement. Another alternative is Accoya – a heat-treated timber that promises superior stability to hardwoods.

Composite Doors

Usually made up of a GRP (glass-reinforced plastic, also referred to as fibreglass) facing with a core made of either polystyrene ('hollow'), fibreglass or timber. Timber core doors offer better security – try maximising the core thickness (48mm is ideal).

Oversized Models

There is a current trend in the contemporary design world for oversized (that is usually over 1m wide – significantly larger than standard) front doors. These add a real sense of drama to a façade and provide a stunning focal point. Inevitably they are a more expensive option than a standard off-the-shelf door, and considerations over their weight need to be made. They are best installed in a new build or substantial remodelling project, where their scale can be designed in from the off.

Pivot doors can be oversized too, budget permitting. Specialists Urban Front supply pivot doors up to 1,200mm wide and 2,400mm tall.

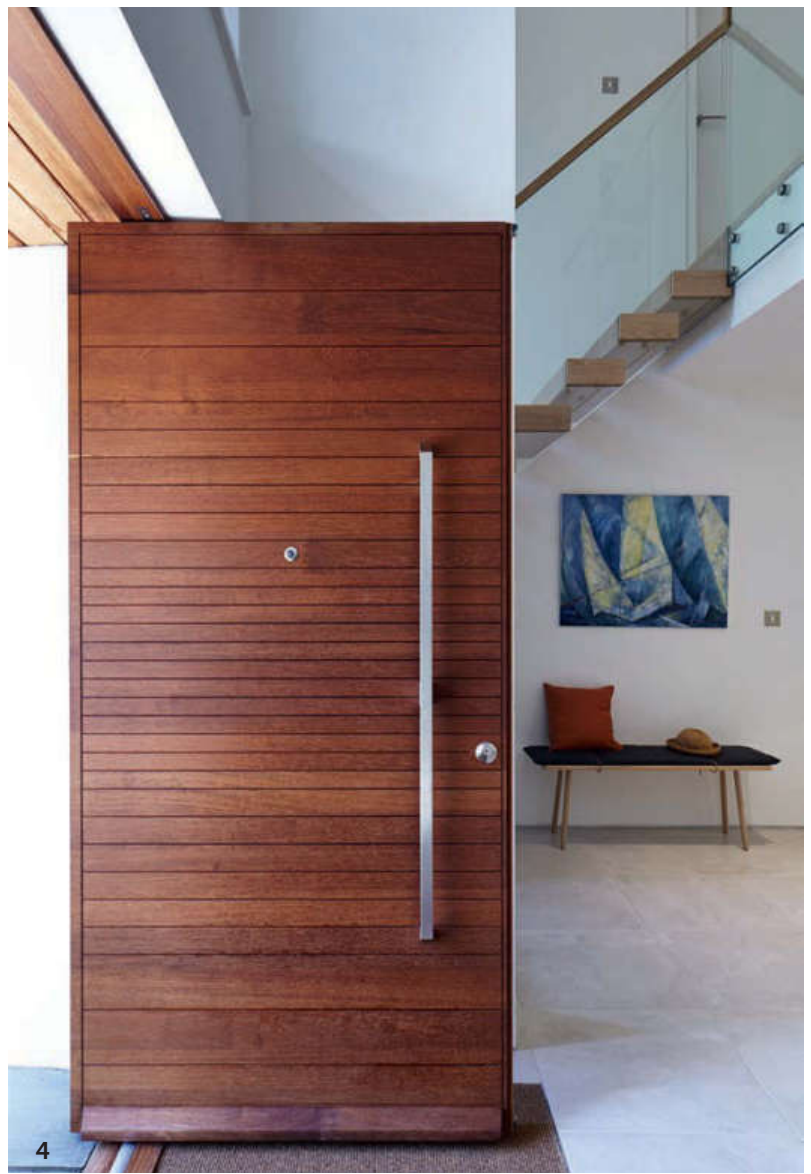
Security

For the first time, the security of front doors (on new homes only, not replacements) is now controlled by Building Regulations. Approved Document Q – published in October 2015 – gives guidance to manufacturers and homeowners on how to achieve the minimum standards. This guidance is based around compliance with PAS 24, a standard which measures door security against three minutes of forceful attack. Ideally, your replacement door should meet these requirements too. **H**



Making an Entrance

1. This timber entrance door is part of Mumford & Wood's Conservation range;
2. This model is from Jeld-Wen's Castle Leeds range, with fibreglass core and GRP finish;
3. Solidor's Naples Aubergine door offers a 48mm solid timber core;
4. This oversized pivot door is from Urban Front;
5. Kloeber's FunkyFront timber door comes in a range of colours, frame and panel styles





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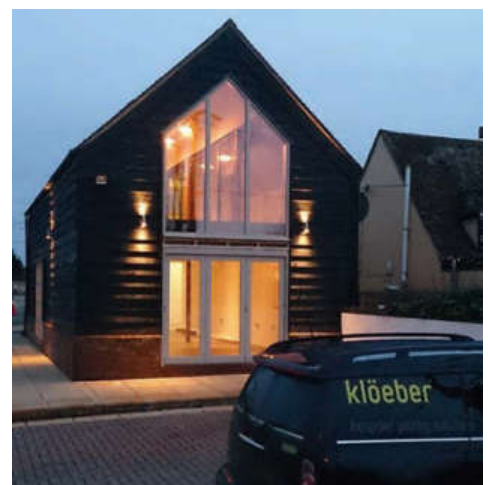
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BEFORE



HOMES RENOVATION AND EXTENSION

At Home in the Garden

Cheryl and Ciaran Maher have transformed a dilapidated cottage in their garden into a contemporary space that meets their family's needs

Words: Caroline Ednie
Photography: Nigel Rigden

PROJECT NOTES

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Location:
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Size: 48m²

House cost:
Already owned

Project cost:
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(£2,500/m²)

Value: The project has added an estimated £150,000 to the property

HOMES RENOVATION AND EXTENSION



Exterior

The new Marley Eternit fibre cement cladding takes its reference from the old, circa 1901 gardener's cottage — the couple and their architect, Wendy Perring of PAD Studio, had originally hoped to retain the existing corrugated tin cladding, but it was beyond repair. The hardwood ipe cladding helps to soften the building. Aluminium-framed French doors and windows from Olsen Doors and Windows complete the look.



HOMES RENOVATION AND EXTENSION



THE QUICK READ

➤ Cheryl (below) and Ciaran Maher have extensively renovated and extended a small, rundown cottage in the garden of their bed and breakfast business

➤ Designed by PAD Studio, the new cottage provides independent living for the couple's daughter Kellie, who requires regular use of a wheelchair, and for their son Alan when he returns home from university. The annexe features two en suite bedrooms, each with their own entrance

➤ The project offered opportunity to vastly improve the thermal performance of the building

The renovation of the rundown two-room gardener's cottage in the grounds of Daisybank Cottage, an Arts and Crafts house converted into a bed and breakfast in the New Forest National Park, has been a saving grace for the family according to owners Cheryl and Ciaran Maher. It might sound like an overstatement for this small-scale project, but the couple's daughter Kellie is receiving ongoing medical treatment for late-stage Lyme disease and requires regular use of a wheelchair. Reviving the fortunes of the annexe has provided Kellie with an 'oasis' where she can live as independently as possible.

The project is a result of the family's bed and breakfast expansion, which meant that Kellie and her brother Alan didn't have enough space when they returned home during university breaks. For several years, the pair had often used the old gardener's cottage, which comprised compact living alongside a horse-and-trap shed as a place to sleep. However, the cottage was dark, damp and uninsulated, making it freezing cold in winter and too hot in summer — far from ideal for Kellie's health. Consequently, the decision was taken to transform the cottage into a two bedroom retreat for the young Mahers.

In 2012 Ciaran and Cheryl approached local architectural practice PAD Studio to redesign the annexe, after seeing their award-winning conversion of Warborne Farm, just outside Lymington, into luxury self-catering accommodation. Architect Wendy Perring of PAD Studio says that the project captured her imagination from the start. "I love taking on quirky challenges and, inspired by Kellie's bravery and determination, I set out to create something special on a tight budget.

"I wanted to make the most of the small rooms and introduce long views through the building to make it feel more spacious. Kellie's main wish was for a bedroom that was flooded with light, with an area for a desk near the window, a terrace where she could grow fresh vegetables and flowers, and a bathroom with a luxurious feel."

Working with the Existing Buildings

One further priority for the project was upgrading the building's thermal performance, while retaining the simple and rustic qualities of the cottage. Fortunately, the New Forest National Park Authority ➤



Living Room

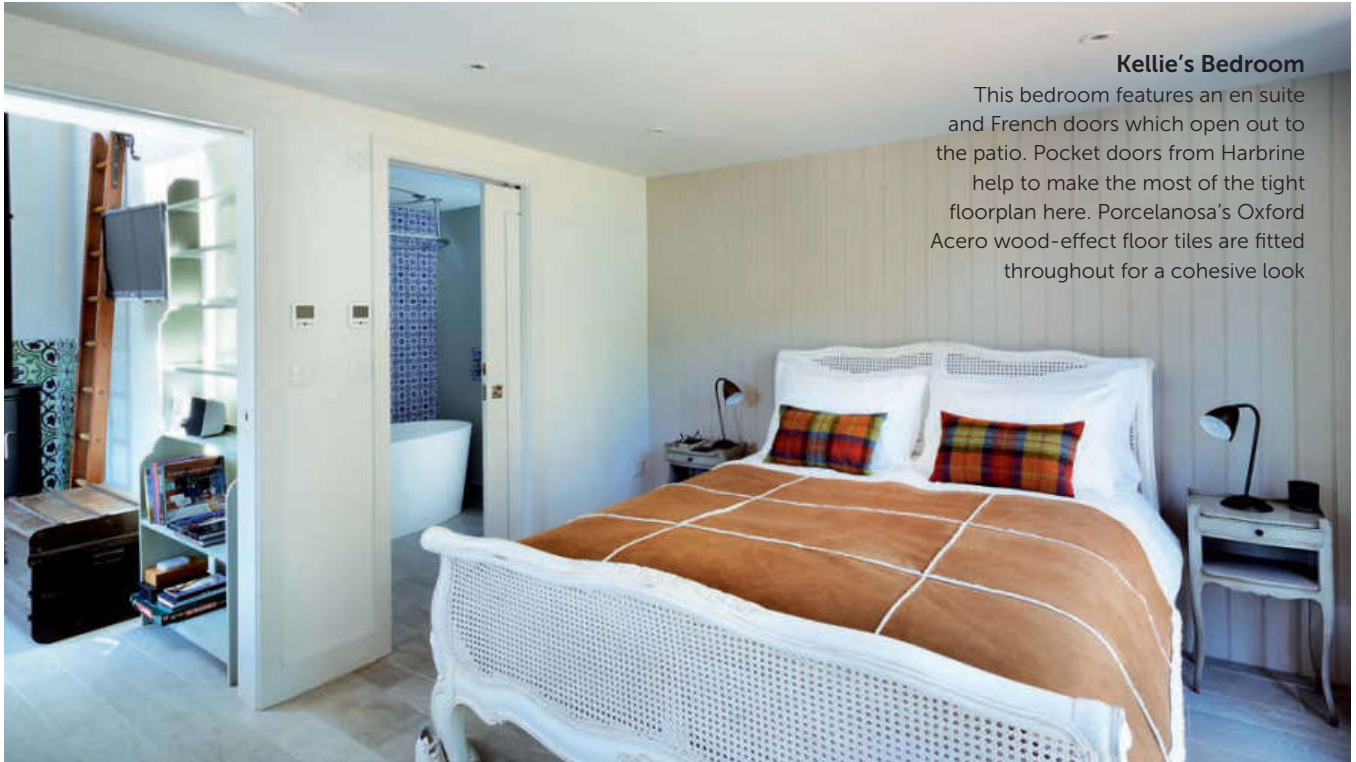
A Morsø woodburning stove provides warmth on colder days. The Fired Earth Quatrefoil tiles provide an injection of colour behind. The ladder, restored by a local blacksmith, provides access to the mezzanine level (below)



En Suite

Fired Earth's Andalucia Almonte tiles provide a vibrant backdrop to the V&A IOS bath from The Big Bath Company





Kellie's Bedroom

This bedroom features an en suite and French doors which open out to the patio. Pocket doors from Harbrine help to make the most of the tight floorplan here. Porcelanosa's Oxford Acero wood-effect floor tiles are fitted throughout for a cohesive look

planners were receptive to PAD Studio's design. "We modelled the building in 3D to help convey the idea of a very simple shed (like the original cottage) which had a new contemporary timber box slid into one corner," explains Wendy of PAD Studio, who opted to undertake a pre-application discussion with the local planning authority before applying for planning permission. "The planners were receptive to our ideas and liked the fact that we were making reference to the original building."

When it came to the build, the cottage's existing concrete foundations were retained, but the structure has been completely rebuilt. "The original plan was to retain the back wall, but once the rest of the cottage was taken down, we were able to see that the existing brickwork was in a shocking state, so we had to take it down," explains Wendy. "However, this presented us with the opportunity to introduce high levels of insulation in the walls. The new timber frame structure has profiled cladding made from recycled cement and fibre, which echoes the materials of the old corrugated tin-clad cottage. Ideally we would have reused the tin, but it was so rusted that we decided to replace it." (The old corrugated cladding has been recycled as a chicken coop roof.)

As well as referencing the original cottage, the profiled sheet cladding was also an affordable option; it's more commonly used in the New Forest for agricultural buildings. It's offset by hardwood ipe wraparound cladding, which offers a softer, warmer aesthetic.

Characterful Interiors

Internally, many of the walls are clad in timber panelling too, which adds a sense of traditional craftsmanship to the project. Kellie's bedroom has windows facing south and west, ensuring that she has plenty of light, with French doors opening on to her own private

terrace. The living area and Alan's bedroom are vaulted to create a sense of drama, and a mezzanine home office with a small window allows for extra flexibility when friends visit.

The cottage is perfect for the siblings as it can be used either as a single entity or as two separate areas, each with their own entrance. "The accommodation for Kellie is all on one level and everything is wheelchair-friendly," says Cheryl. "The cottage feels so spacious, and the rooms have pocket doors, which help to create a sense of flow. To avoid clutter there's a great storage area above the bathroom."

The build process went remarkably smoothly and took just four months, from December to April. During the project, Kellie and Cheryl visited Brussels for an intensive course of treatment, and communicated ideas with Wendy via Pinterest. "Cheryl also scoured the wonderful fleamarkets of Brussels, so she was constantly sending through images of things that she had seen, to see if we could incorporate ideas. It was a very creative process," says Wendy.

The building was completed a few days before Kellie's return, and she cites the renovation as a major driving force in her determination to pull through four months of hospitalisation. "When she and Cheryl arrived home and saw the completed cottage, Kellie could not believe that her ideas had become reality," continues Wendy. "Filled with light, and enjoying a direct relationship to the outside world, Kellie's new living space gives her the independence that she craved and has enabled her to enjoy her freedom for the first time in many years."

Though she is still undergoing treatment and will be recuperating for many months to come, Kellie believes that this beautiful environment is enhancing her wellbeing. "The cottage has given us a way forward," concludes Cheryl. "It says so much about the healing power of good design." ➡

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HOMES RENOVATION AND EXTENSION

The Project



Wendy Perring
Architect

ARCHITECT'S VIEW

We are drawn to small unusual spaces with a strong sense of place that we look to enhance. It was essential on this project that the compact floorplan was as efficient as possible as our brief for the rebuilding was to accommodate two bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, a kitchenette and a living space. We wanted to go further and enhance the relationship with the garden and create a place of calm retreat and restoration for the owners.

The entrance opens into a double-height living area at the centre of the plan that is flooded with light from the garden. The double height is a device which helps the space to feel bigger than it is... the eye is drawn upwards to the mezzanine area created above the adjacent bedroom. This allows light and changing shadows to fall across the living space and is key to the success of this building — it works in three dimensions, not just two and the location in the middle of the plan avoids wasting space with corridors.

Both bedrooms are designed to be generous enough to accommodate a desk and comfortable chair to relax in: This was essential as, on occasion, the rooms will be used as guest accommodation for the family's boutique B&B business. The rooms were designed around the placement of furniture and the views from the bed and as you move through the spaces. Particular aspects of the garden are framed and the openings deliberately placed to allow morning or evening shafts of sunlight to fall across the rooms.

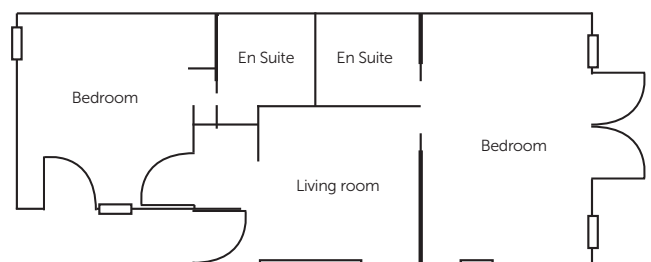
SUPPLIERS

Architect PAD Studio01590 670780; padstudio.co.uk
Interior designer Jane McIntyrejanemcintyredesign.com
Blacksmith Gino Rickard of Nu-Co Forge ...01590 674928
Cladding Marley Eternit01732 780680
Wood Trend0207 460 5000
Doors and windows Olsen Doors and Windows01777 874510
Bathrooms The Big Bath Companybigbathcompany.com
Woodburning stove Morsømorsø.co.uk
Floor tiles Porcelanosaporcelanosa.com/uk
Wall tiles Fired Earthfiredearth.com
Shutters Arizona Shuttersarizonashutters.co.uk

SELECTED COSTS

Building work	£87,000
Flooring	£5,000
Bathrooms	£6,000
Shutters and curtains	£5,000
Patio and pathway	£7,000
Fees etc.	£10,000
Total	£120,000

Ground Floor





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ROOM DESIGN

Designing the Perfect HOME OFFICE

Tired of using one corner of the guest bedroom as your home office? Natasha Brinsmead explains how to create the perfect work-from-home set up, however big or small the space you have available



THE 2-IN-1 HOME OFFICE

Home offices tend to be occasional rather than permanently used (as say a living room might) and so many people combine it with another 'occasional' room — such as the dining room or a spare room. If your home office is part of a multifunctional room, it is vital that you provide enough storage for any associated paperwork to be put away when not needed. A computer console — which can be closed up when not in use — is perfect, hiding away clutter at the same time as all thoughts of work.

Alcoves can be transformed into work spaces with the addition of a deep shelf with space for a chair beneath, wall shelves above, some extra sockets and ideally cupboard doors to shut it all away. Fitted wardrobes and cupboards under the stairs can be given the same treatment.



Planned Spaces

Outbuildings and garages can make ideal home offices if properly lit, heated and insulated, as this example (above) shows, featuring Humanscale office furniture from John Lewis. Keeping oft-used items within arm's reach is also key, with well-placed storage and shelving, such as this set up from Neville Johnson

GET THE LIGHTING RIGHT

Ceiling-based spots tend to cause unwelcome shadow — which is why desk lamps are so popular. In terms of natural lighting, beware window positions. Avoid placing your desk in such a way that your computer will face a window — on sunny

days the glare can make it hard to see the screen. Likewise, desks up against south-facing windows can be practically unusable during the day. Rooflights work well in home offices, providing a good clear light throughout the day.





MINIMISE DISTRACTION

When working from home it can be hard to stay focused when surrounded by the hustle and bustle of home life. For this reason it is a good idea to aim to locate the home office somewhere away from noise hot spots and everyday clutter.

A loft conversion is ideal, or a dedicated study ideally situated away from the living room or children's bedrooms.

If you have the space, a room located close to or with an adjoining WC helps to minimise the risk of household distractions,

as does keeping tea or coffee making facilities in the room — you will be less likely to wander off to do something else if you don't have to leave the room to make a drink.

Finally, although it is tempting to place your desk or workstation opposite a window, if the view or sight of people out and about enjoying a sunny day is likely to interfere with your work, then it may be best to situate the desk elsewhere in the room.

GARDEN OFFICES

If you have the space in the garden and you are serious about working from home, then do make use of it for a dedicated home office — it can be the perfect solution. It could be a kit summer house, a modular home office building from the likes of companies such as OfficePOD, a small log cabin or a proper small building.

Good insulation is a must if you want to use it all year round, as is lighting (your electrician should be able to connect an outbuilding to the electricity in the house fairly easily), sockets and a heat source. Think too about double glazing and good security measures.

You can usually build a garden room under Permitted Development, but check first with your local authority.

Working in Style

There is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution for home offices — they should be tailored to how you work and type of work you undertake



LAYOUT

While the layout of the room will very much be dictated by the space you have available, remember that a desk does not always have to face a wall or window. If you have the space, locating it more centrally in the room makes the room feel much more professional and leaves space behind for storage and in front for seating. Desk-based working is less effective (in this world of laptops and smartphones) so informal seating should be considered too. If you can't make yourself comfortable on a sofa while working at home, when can you?



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LOAF; SHARPS; NEVILLE JOHNSON; TEAM 7

Designers on Home Offices



**Henry
Saunders,
Designer,
Neville Johnson**

"Storage is Key"

If you work from home on a daily basis, it is advisable to have a home office designed specifically around your individual needs. Consider what it is you will be storing in your home office, and what is the minimum amount of storage that you feel you need now — and in the future.

The main item of furniture required within a home office is a desk with enough room for your monitor and keyboard. It is also imperative to include cabinets that house all the computer hardware out of sight, as well as peripherals

such as cable management.

The items that you use on a daily basis should be within arm's reach of the desk seating position. There should also be adequate working space either side of you.

A consultation with an experienced home office designer is recommended to overcome the challenges. The designer will be able to assist in defining your storage requirements and then create a room design that meets those specific requirements — utilising the space available in your home and making the most of any awkward spaces such as sloping ceilings and alcoves.

"Depends on the Job!"

Everyone works in a different way and requires different equipment, conditions and resources and as a result there really cannot be a 'standard' solution that would suit everyone. In fact, there will be as many different solutions as there are different types of job.

Ask yourself a few questions: How do you prefer to work? Do you like to be shut away or is disturbance not a problem? Would a view distract or inspire your work? Do you need to meet colleagues or clients? Will you require lots of filing space or is your work all computerised? Do you use any special equipment that needs to be stored for off-site use or do you need to have lots of tools at hand? How might your home circumstances play a part? Do you have noisy neighbours or small children?

If you need to shut yourself away from the rest of the house, a loft space is a good candidate, but unless it has already been converted, this is a relatively expensive solution. If you want to create your own space, a cabin-style outbuilding in the garden is a great addition to your property and can be alternatively used as a home gym or guest room if you stop working from home.



**Hugo Tugman,
Architect
Your Home**



**Rachal Hutcheson,
Home Office
Design Expert,
Sharps**

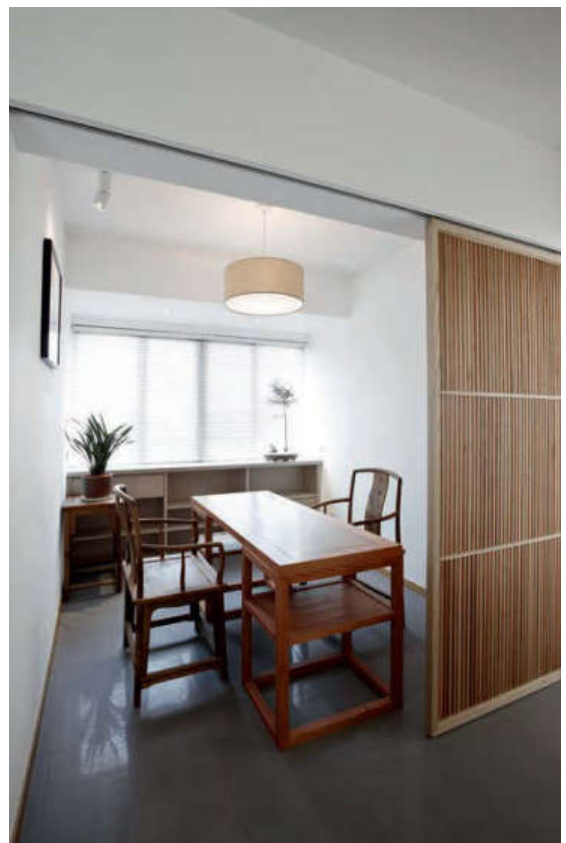
"Artificial Light Needs Thought"

With space at a premium in many homes nowadays, home offices are being incorporated into even the most awkward of spaces, such as under the stairs, in corners of bedrooms, and in alcoves.

Unlike freestanding furniture which doesn't always make the most of the room available, using a bespoke solution means each inch of space is used well. Another way in which you can ensure that your work area is kept clutter-free and maximise the space available is to select a home office that incorporates a sliding door design — these give you the option to display or hide away your work files, laptops and printers as required.

The traditionally unconventional spaces in which home offices are increasingly being positioned in around the home may not have natural light readily available and therefore it is integral that artificial light is properly utilised to illuminate work spaces so that you can work comfortably.

The style of your home office furniture can also give the illusion of a larger space. Choosing fitted furniture in a light grained wood will ensure that your work area looks light and clutter-free, while cupboards with high-gloss finishes will reflect light to again give the appearance of a larger space. **H**





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REMODELLING



Before & After

A brick-clad home receives a modern extension. Architect Tom Williams explains

The clients were based in Thailand, but with family in England they wanted a base here instead of staying in hotels. They found this house and loved the garden and location, however the layout didn't work for them. They wanted to renovate the property and create an open plan space. We were approached with a brief to rationalise the floorplan and create a design which drew light into the home.

We came up with a proposal to extend the property to the front, side and rear. When we got further into the technical drawings the clients expressed interest in changing the cramped first floor accommodation, where four bedrooms were squeezed in and there was a small landing. As a result of the extensions and changes at first floor level we ended up removing the entire rear wall of the house.

When we applied for planning permission the plans sailed through. The only constraint we faced was the garden: we had to be careful the rear extension didn't come out too far as there were some protected mature oak trees on site.

The clients were keen for the rear extension to contrast with the original property and wanted something contemporary, and so crisp white render was

used with aluminium bi-fold doors to create the modern style they were after. A flat roof here incorporates rooflights which help to bring light into the home. The flat roof also oversails the walls to provide shelter from the elements.

Fortunately, as the house was relatively new (only built around 10 years ago) we were still able to purchase the same bricks used for the existing property for the new front and side extensions as well as the new first floor rear external wall. In order to match the new brick with the weathered originals, a brick tint was applied — the new bricks are now unrecognisable from the existing.

Internally, the floorplan has been opened up and the former rabbit warren of rooms attached to the small hallway has been replaced with a large central core from which all of the spaces lead off. To the front of the property there is now a formal living room where the homeowners can retire to in the evenings, while the rear of the property houses the new open plan kitchen/family/diner which acts as the communal hub of the home. On the first floor, all of the walls were removed and the four cramped bedrooms have been transformed into three large bedrooms all boasting en suites. The clients love it. **H**



**Tom Williams is Director
at ID Architecture
(idarchitecture.co.uk)**

HOMES CONTEMPORARY SELF-BUILD

The Family Tree

Maria and Paul Kelly have built a spacious family home on a plot which previously belonged to Maria's grandparents

Words: Debbie Jeffery
Photography: Darren Chung

PROJECT NOTES

Project:

Contemporary
self-build

Location: Essex

Dates: Oct 11
– Jan 14

Size: 334m²

Land cost:
£350,000

Conversion cost:
£375,000
(£1,123/m²)

Value: £1.1million

HOMES CONTEMPORARY SELF-BUILD



THE QUICK READ

⇒ Paul and Maria Kelly decided to buy the dormer bungalow which had belonged to Maria's grandparents and replace it with a larger family home

⇒ The couple worked with architect Paul Clark to design a spacious, open plan, five-bed house, constructed in steel frame and blockwork. It features contemporary dormer windows which take their cue from the original building on site

⇒ Paul and Maria worked together to project manage the build, and a large proportion of the manual work was completed by Paul, a roofer by profession

Finding a plot of land usually proves to be one of the biggest hurdles for prospective self-builders, but the task came surprisingly easy for Paul and Maria Kelly — their new home has been built on land which was previously owned by Maria's grandparents. And what a plot it is too — the five acre site is situated at the top of a hill, on the outskirts of an Essex village, and is surrounded by farmland and open countryside.

"My grandparents built their dormer bungalow there back in the 1960s," says Maria. "I have lovely memories of time spent at their home, playing outside in the garden, so when the bungalow needed to be sold to pay for my grandmother's ongoing care Paul and I decided that we would sell our own house and buy it."

⇒





The couple and their children – Charlie, 25, and Isabelle, 17 – moved into the single storey bungalow in 2010, despite discovering that the flimsy building was not considered structurally sound by their mortgage lender. A large willow tree planted by Maria's grandfather 45 years before had caused structural problems, and the bank refused to transfer the couple's mortgage from their previous home.

Undeterred, Maria and Paul, together with their architect Paul Clark, applied for planning permission to build a larger replacement dwelling on the plot. "I first got chatting to architect Paul Clark when he bought a designer office chair from me on eBay, and we got on extremely well," says Maria. "Two years on I remembered him, and asked if he would help design our new home."

Maria is a designer by profession, and together with Paul she created a moodboard and a detailed brief of the family's requirements. The new property has been designed on two floors, with an open plan, split-level kitchen/dining/family room and a separate sitting room on the ground floor. Upstairs, a bridge-style landing leads to five bedrooms, and looks over the vaulted living space below.

Paul Clark designed the rooms to follow the path of the sun during the day. The master bedroom and kitchen now enjoy the sunrise and early morning light, with the sitting room and patio benefitting from warmth in the afternoon and evening.

The family continued to live in the old bungalow during the build, which took over two years to complete once planning permission

Above: Opening Out to the Garden

The house was designed to make the most of the private country setting and the best of the natural light throughout the day, with large windows and glass doors. The new house is constructed using a steel frame – which supports the numerous large openings – and blockwork walls, finished in white render. The triple-glazed black aluminium framed sliding doors, from Greensteps, break up the façade

had been granted. Soon after work began, however, a mains sewer was discovered running across the plot where piled foundations needed to go, and a new planning application therefore had to be submitted to move the house three metres forward, which cost both time and money.

"We needed piled foundations in order to keep the willow tree, which was something I was determined to do, whatever the cost," Maria explains. "It was probably the only thing that Paul and I bickered over, but my grandfather loved that tree and now we're so glad we saved it."

A Hands-on Build

Paul is a roofer by trade, and he had built two extensions to the family's previous home, in addition to constructing a new house for Maria's mother. He decided to tackle as much of the building work ➡





HOMES CONTEMPORARY SELF-BUILD



Opposite: Open Plan First Floor

Paul fitted the kitchen in the vast open plan kitchen/dining/family room on the ground floor, which was designed around the pendant lights above the island. The Homebase kitchen cost £11,000, including the Minerva worktops and all appliances. The living room (bottom far left) also enjoys the views through large windows, but situated to the other end of the floorplan is a more intimate space

as possible on the new family home, including the groundworks, carpentry and roofing, working alongside his chosen tradespeople.

The Kellys' house measures 9.5 metres wide, and in order to support the numerous large openings a steel frame was required, which serves as the building's skeleton. This was designed by a structural engineer, made locally and then erected by Paul and three others on site piece by piece, like giant Meccano.

Externally, the steel frame has been clad with white rendered blockwork walls, and a substantial chimney rises up at one end. Contemporary dormer windows with secret guttering pop out from the roof, which is covered in grey concrete pantiles.

Glazed openings play an important role in this house: large triple-glazed, argon-filled black aluminium windows and several sets of sliding doors bring light into the interior and create a connection to the landscaped garden beyond, with views across the surrounding fields. The largest of the sliding doors weighs 1.5 tons, and lowering it into place proved one of the most difficult elements of the build for Paul.

"I didn't want bi-folds, because they can break up the view," explains Maria, who gave up work for two years to project manage the build, sourcing and purchasing materials. "Our front door is twice the height of a standard door — in fact everything in the house is very big and chunky, so that it all appears in proportion." ➡

HOMES CONTEMPORARY SELF-BUILD





Opposite: First Floor Rooms

A visit to Marrakech inspired the use of waterproof Moroccan tadelakt plaster in all of the open showers (top left) as a cost-effective alternative to tiling — it creates a low-maintenance and attractive surface. The money saved has been spent on high-quality Villeroy & Boch sanitaryware. Inexpensive oak stairs lead up to the bridged landing. Engineered oak flooring has been laid in the bedrooms

Building a Home During a Recession

“The most stressful thing was funding the build during a recession, and when our money ran out we had to borrow from family until the bank considered the house habitable,” says Maria, who put her career on hold to concentrate full-time on the build. “It was a frightening time, and I ended up going back to work for three days a week while we limped to the end of the build, when we were finally considered eligible for a standard mortgage.”

In order to save money the couple shopped carefully and came up with some creative solutions. Instead of spending thousands of pounds on a staircase, the couple’s staircase is concealed behind a painted brick wall, which appears to be freestanding and cost just a few hundred pounds to build, while the internal fire doors were £22 each and have been painted in vibrant colours.

The couple undertook research into installing solar panels, and even solar roof slates, but in the end they felt it was more important to spend the money on the fabric of the building. Good-quality windows and doors, high levels of insulation and efficient underfloor heating keep running costs low, despite the fact that the house is so much larger than its predecessor.

“Moving out of the bungalow and into the new house was a shock, because, although it is three times the size of the old bungalow it only costs about half as much to heat,” says Maria. “We named it Hunsdon House, which was my grandparents’ surname. Continuing in their footsteps and building a family home on the same plot of land just felt like the right thing to do.” **H**



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HOMES CONTEMPORARY SELF-BUILD

The Project



Maria and Paul Kelly
Homeowners

HOMEOWNERS' VIEW

The floorplan makes for great, open family living. It is light and airy but homely and comfortable. A good design makes such a difference to how you live. One piece of advice we would pass on is to consider where you will be in five years from the outset of a building project, as the process can be lengthy, and what's right for you at the beginning quickly changes. Paul and I now spend much of our time here as there is just

the two of us — our son Charlie has his own home and, at 17, our daughter is out for much of the time. Designing a home which will be adaptable in the future is key, and we've converted Charlie's old bedroom into a gym. We also added a home office nook on the ground floor, when we realised that we needed somewhere to work. A house should definitely be able to change with your needs.

ARCHITECT'S VIEW

The form of the house is a traditional and recognisable shape: a simple rectangular box topped with a pitched roof and with a chimney at one end; Maria requested an 'interesting' chimney. Windows and openings are cut into the walls where they are required, resulting in an asymmetrical and more contemporary appearance. The result is a traditional form with a modern twist.

The arrangement of rooms was in some way dictated by the location of the kitchen. The open plot allowed us to take advantage of sunlight throughout the day, and the kitchen is positioned on the south side, with windows facing both east and west allowing views.

Internally we introduced two double-height spaces which are not expressed externally and are meant to be a surprise. Maria was keen to include a level change on the ground floor, and since the site is flat this was achieved by reducing the ground levels externally too, resulting in differing ceiling heights for added interest.

SUPPLIERS

Architect Paul Clark Architects	020 8780 9138
.....paulclarkarchitects.com;	
Main contractor Homebuild	07880 704870
Steelwork RJ Cannon.....	01621 815396
Windows and solar-powered rooflights	
Velfac	01223 897100
Doors GreenSteps.....	01449 257591
Materials Tiptree Building Supplies	01621 819220
Kitchen Homebase	0345 077 8888
Worktops Minerva	minervaworksurfaces.co.uk
Sanitaryware Villeroy & Boch	villeroy-boch.co.uk
Hard landscaping NB Contracts.....	07507 280100
Porcelain tiles Tons of Tiles.....	tonsoftiles.co.uk
Moroccan plaster Buxton Plastering	07590 625100

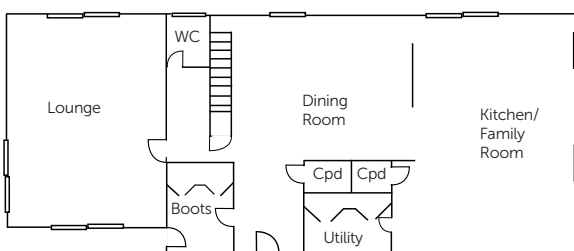
SELECTED COSTS

Professional fees	£35,000
Groundworks up to block and beam floor	£50,000
Steel frame	£30,000
Blockwork and roof	£90,000
Windows and doors	£45,000
Internal fixing and finishing	£100,000
Landscaping	£25,000

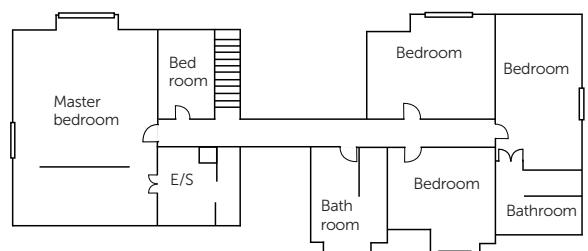
BUILD TIMELINE

Jan 10 Plot purchase completed	Dec 11 Foundations completed
May 11 First planning application submitted	May 12 Watertight shell
Oct 11 Planning permission approved	Jun 12 First fix
Oct 11 Start on site	Oct 13 Second fix
	Nov 13 Final decoration
	Jan 14 Date occupied

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



GALLERY

External Makeovers

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Tudor Manor
Self-designed

Unrecognisable as a once boxy, red-brick Georgian home, this property in Shropshire oozes character thanks to its new Tudor-style façade. With the majority of the building work carried out by the homeowner, the house now features two side extensions constructed in timber frame with infill panels. Twin gables add both width and height to the structure while providing increased accommodation internally.

Radical Remodel
Tony Holt Design

This dated bungalow is now an impressive contemporary family home, and features a symmetrical twin-gabled design, while crisp white render under a slate roof evokes modern style. Slate-effect cast concrete tiles and timber are used as interesting cladding materials to help break up the elevation and add warmth. Full-height glazing allows light to flood the interiors.



ALISTAIR NICHOLLS

Before



New England-Style Remodel WSW Consultancy

This East Coast-inspired home, based in Hampshire, takes its cue from houses across the pond thanks to an extension and remodelling scheme. Replacing the dated and discoloured render and brick, the exterior is clad in timber and fresh render, while the new oak frame porch adds character.

SIMON MAXWELL

Miami Retreat Inglis Badrashi Loddo Architects

This 1960s semi has been extensively remodelled into a home akin to a South Beach villa. A rear extension, new storey with roof terrace and white cladding add to the home's sleek new style, while large glazed bi-folds enable light to enter this once dark home.



Before



BEN MORGAN

Before



ANDREW LEE

Commercial Conversion Cameron Webster Architects

Previously a semi-derelict commercial building on an awkward plot, this building has been subject to a dramatic transformation. Clad in timber, the upper level appears to float over the predominantly glazed ground floor thanks to concealed steelwork. **H**

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Modern Character

Despite its Conservation Area setting, Richard Bancroft has transformed an old Harrogate coach house into a two bedroom home — for just £150,000

Words: **Karen Darlow**

Photography: **Jeremy Phillips**

THE QUICK READ

➡ Richard Bancroft used his knowledge as a property developer to renovate an old coach house into his own two-bed home in a Harrogate Conservation Area

➡ Wishing to create an individual home, Richard improved the specification to include a wealth of extras, including a glass floor above the kitchen area which acts as a key feature

➡ While a new roof was needed and extensive work undertaken, Richard managed to renovate the coach house for just £150,000

Looking at Richard Bancroft's small but perfectly formed home, it's hard to imagine the building serving any other purpose than that of an unusually characterful domestic dwelling. Yet when Richard bought the old coach house, he intended it to be put to use as garages for the two apartments he had developed at the other end of the site.

"It was the architect who had drawn up the plans for those apartments who suggested we'd probably get planning permission to develop the coach house into a detached dwelling," explains Richard. So he sold his two refurbished apartments to finance the coach house renovation for himself and his partner Sonja Morgan. ➡



PROJECT NOTES

Project: Coach house conversion

Location:
Harrogate

Dates: May
- Oct 2013

Size: 130m²

Plot cost:
£50,000

Build cost:
£150,000
(£1,153/m²)

Value: £375,000

Open Plan Living

A real entertainers' haven, the kitchen/dining/family space is all open plan to the hallway, allowing guests to immediately enter the hub of the home — and also eliminating the need for a dark, cramped hallway. A Magnet kitchen is cleverly zoned in the large space thanks to its U shape, while wood flooring has been laid throughout. The feature pendant light above the dining table is from Rasmus



HOMES COACH HOUSE CONVERSION



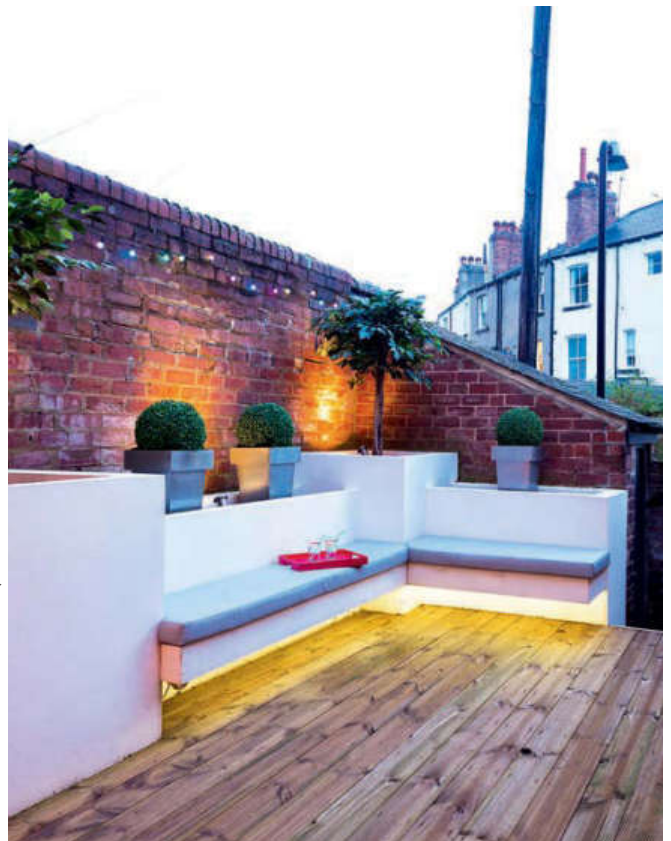
While developing properties is Richard's business, this one was different — as he was planning to live in it himself rather than putting it up for rental. He applied for planning permission, initially securing it for a one bedroom house, comprising both a one storey and a two storey section. "The builders, however, said that for another £11,000-£12,000 we could extend the roofline across and make a two bedroom home," says Richard, "so I went back to the architect and we reapplied for planning permission."

The Planning Stages

While the coach house isn't listed, it is in a Conservation Area, and Harrogate Council, says Richard, is notoriously strict. Nevertheless, permission came through with just a couple of minor changes — there was an outside toilet on the site which had to remain intact. "The planners said it added amenity value, so that was a bit of a sticking point," says Richard. "But we've turned it into an outside storage space. We also originally applied for planning permission for four rooflights in each bedroom, but these weren't allowed because the planning department said people would be able to see all the way through. Again, that was disappointing — as the rooflights ➡

Right and Top: Blurred Boundaries

An outdoor decked terrace accessed through bi-fold doors offers entertaining space, with steps down to the old outside toilet and the back gate. Fake trees and plants from Costco allow for a low-maintenance garden, and tube lighting beneath the outdoor bench adds a soft glow in the evenings



HOMES COACH HOUSE RENOVATION



were angled upwards and secondly, the coach house is behind a big building, so no one on the street would be able to see in. Now we have three rooflights in each room, which we had to offset in a triangle, but it works fine and it's nice and light up there."

Dealing with Site Constraints

Being an existing building the layout was fairly restricted, and there was little room to extend sideways, but in terms of the design elements there was plenty of scope for originality. "We could see that within the structure of the building we could have a bit more fun and that was what we did," says Richard. "We were determined to make it individual."

Unfortunately, the builder who had developed the apartments retired after the build, so Richard had to find a new one. "We put the project out to tender on myhammer.co.uk and a guy came over from Manchester and showed me a house he'd worked on just down the road from where I was." He was duly appointed as the main contractor and brought all of his trades in, but Richard was on site every day to project manage and oversee the build.

For a small home the project was still a major undertaking. The roof had to come off and the structurally unsound brickwork was stripped right back to just below the ground floor windows. The brick walls were then built back up, with new lintels above window and doors openings and a new roof added.

There were no services on site, so these had to be brought in. A metal framework was constructed around the inside of the property to contain all of the services and insulation; it's hidden behind plasterboard. "I hadn't used that system before," explains Richard, "but it worked well because we had to keep the existing walls and it gives a very tidy finish."

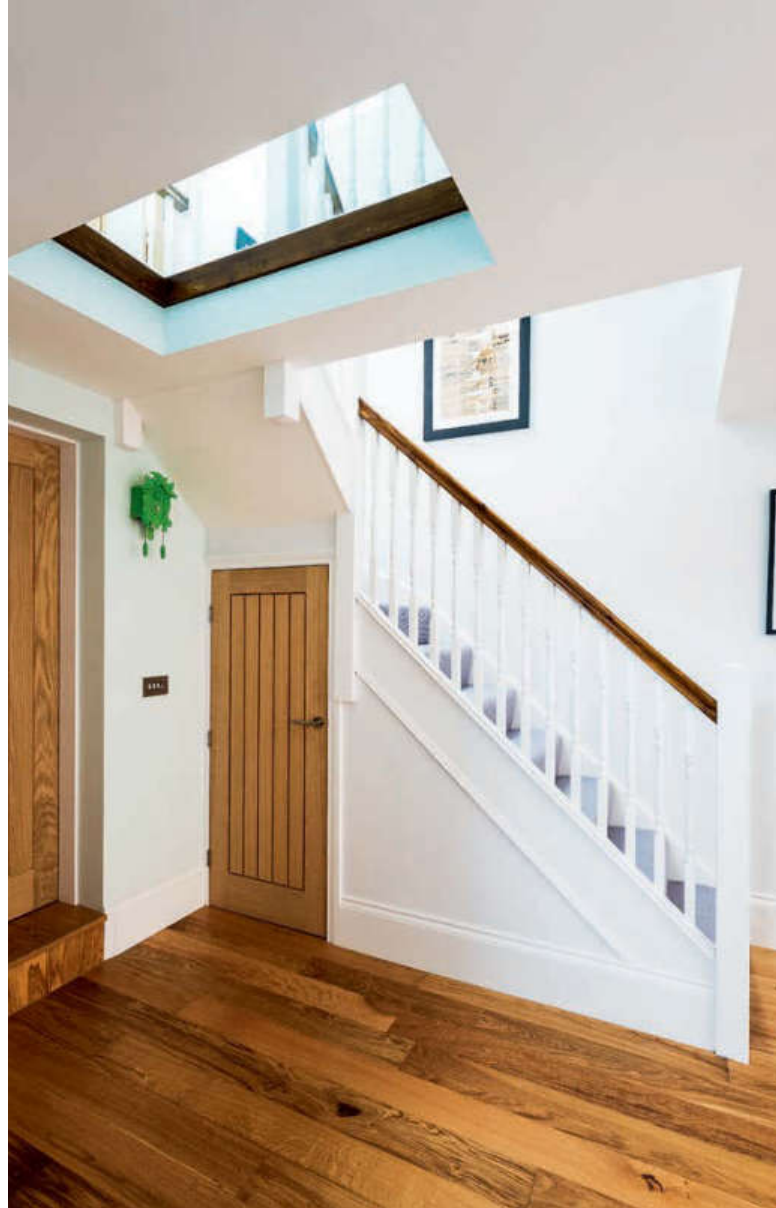
Another matter stipulated as a result of the building sitting within a Conservation Area, was that the house had to have timber windows. "We didn't need to have timber framed sliding doors though; we could have had aluminium ones," says Richard, "and with hindsight, I wish we had, because the wood was a bit warped and to get them lined up was very difficult, so I'd definitely choose aluminium next time."

A High-Spec Home

Overall, Richard agrees the finish is excellent, and the project was completed more or less on time – although the roofers took two weeks longer than scheduled and the brickwork had to be stripped back further than anticipated – and on budget, with the only thing changing being Richard's increasing spec.

That improved spec included the new glass floor – or ceiling, depending on your point of view – which hadn't featured on Richard's original plans. Originally, the plan was to have a glass staircase, but the cost of putting one in was too expensive and so he opted for the glass floor to act as a feature, but also to let more light into the kitchen. "I spoke to the builder about the glass floor and he'd never done one before, but was keen to give it a go," explains Richard.

Richard and the builder talked the idea through with the glass company and a structural engineer. "The glass section weighed about 36kg, and the builders refused to walk on it when it was in — they made me be the first person to walk on it!" says Richard. "It works really well as a feature and it's obviously a real talking



Above and Opposite: Light-Filled Interiors

Carefully positioned glazing allows light to filter down deep into the floorplan — the glazed floor above the open plan kitchen/hallway is a real highlight of the home





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HOMES COACH HOUSE RENOVATION



Above: Master Bedroom

Richard's favourite room in the home, the master bedroom features a Juliette balcony and luxury en suite (below right) clad in grey porcelain tiles from Atlas Tiles, supplied by Abacus Direct. The towel rail is also from Abacus Direct and the sanitaryware is from their Vessini range

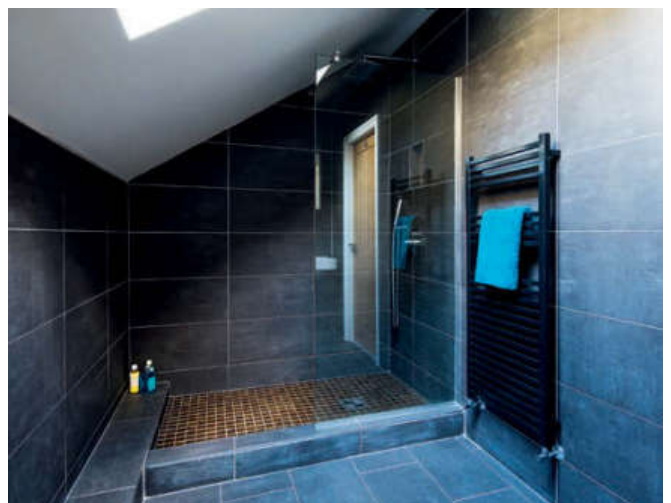
point. Whenever my niece and nephew come round, the first thing they do is run upstairs and stick their faces on it and pull funny faces at people below."

Now that the build is finished, Richard says he loves the fact that he can drive his car into the garage: "If it is chucking it down with rain, it doesn't matter because I'm already in my house, in the dry." Surely a fitting feature for a former coach house.

After living in a succession of three apartments, Richard appreciates having outside space too. "I'm not a gardener, and it's not a big garden, but it makes a big difference," he says. "You can open the patio doors, and even if it's raining, it just extends the living room — it's great for barbecues.

"The other thing we really appreciate is having a spare room. Once every six weeks we might have someone to stay, so we decided to make it a dual purpose room and have a home cinema — it was so cheap to put in too. For the wiring, sound system and the projector, it cost us about £1,500 and the quality is incredible. We didn't even need a screen. We just made sure the plasterers really got that wall smooth, painted it white and we now project on to that wall — it works so well. We then stuck a sofa bed in there so we can still use it as a guest room."

So what can an experienced property developer like Richard learn from renovating his own home? "You don't have to play it safe," he concludes. "We took a gamble with the glass floor, and we get so many positive comments about it. So if you're building your dream house, do it exactly how you want to do it — don't worry about what anyone else might think." **H**





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HOMES COACH HOUSE RENOVATION

The Project



Richard Bancroft
Homeowner

HOMEOWNER'S VIEW

We were limited with the floorplan as it was an existing building. The brief was to keep lots of storage and have fewer bigger rooms. We wanted to have a cinema in the spare room too in order that we got more use out of this room, and we also wanted to bring the outdoors in.

It is a great house. We took some gambles with the glass floor and wall-paper finishes and all have worked, and we will use them on the next house. The space works really well for us and it's important in the planning stage to design your house around your lifestyle.

When doing a project like this you need to plan down to every last detail as there are always things that will be forgotten. Also, make sure you know what each finishing product is as communication problems could lead to not getting what you think you're expecting. Where possible try and supply all of the finishing products.

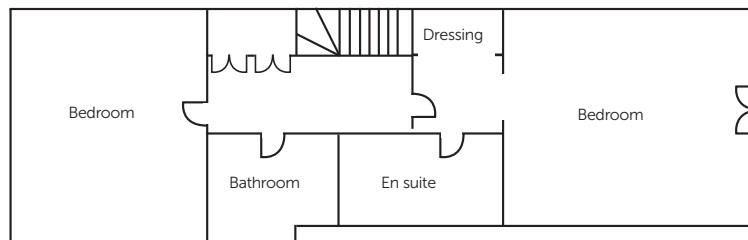
SUPPLIERS

Architects SRH Design Solutions07827 737905; srhdesignsolutions.co.uk
Builder Nigel Hill of Hills Designs.....hillsdesignprojects.co.uk
Bathrooms Abacus Direct0845 850 5040
Flooring Calverts Carpetscalverts-carpets.co.uk
Kitchen Magnetmagnet.co.uk
Feature pendant light above dining table Rasmusrasmusdesign.co.uk
Local suppliers Travis Perkinstravisperkins.co.uk

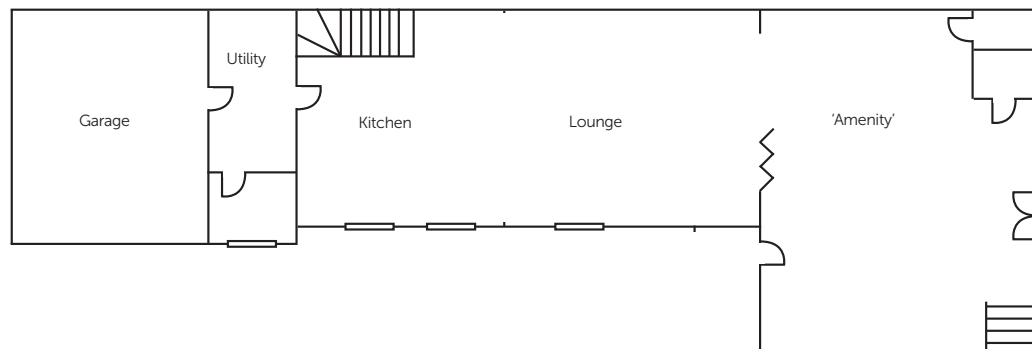
BUILD TIME

Apr 11 Plot purchased
Aug 12 First planning application submitted
Oct 12 Planning permission approved
May 13 Work started on site
Aug 13 Built to weathertight stage
Aug 13 First fix stage
Sep 13 Second fix stage
Oct 13 Final decoration and move in

First Floor



Ground Floor



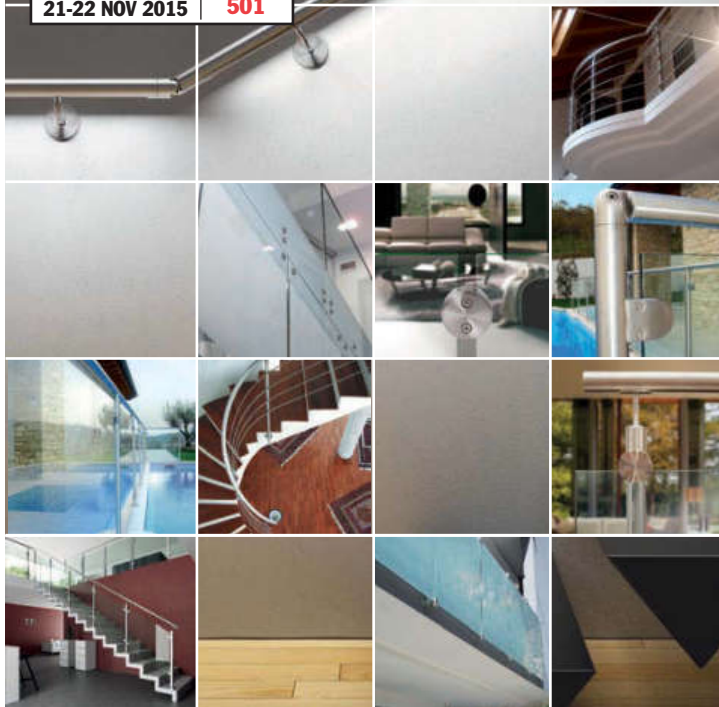
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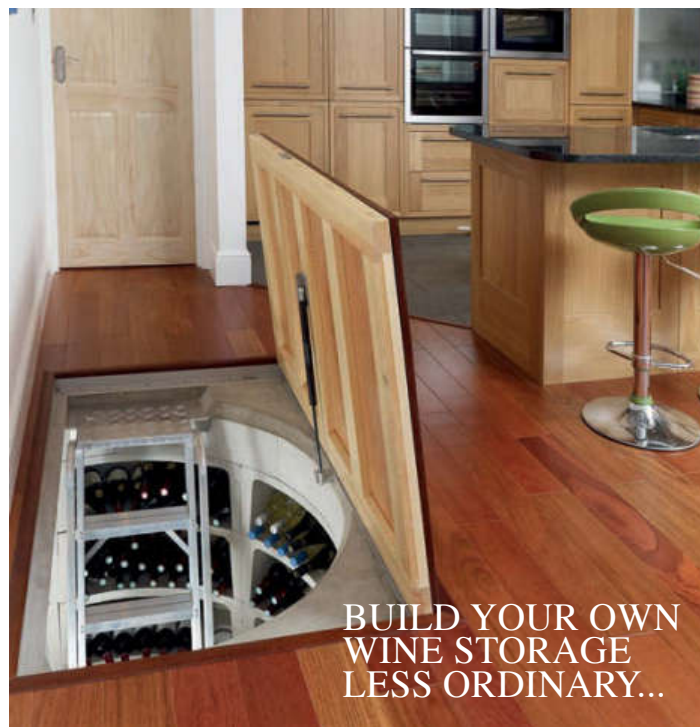
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INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Ideas for Every Room

In this cut-out-and-keep gallery, Natasha Brinsmead offers the best spatial design ideas for introducing light into your new home

THE KITCHEN



LUKE FOREMAN

The Well-Lit Kitchen

With the issue of overlooking to contend with, this kitchen extension to a period home has cleverly overcome the problem of a potential lack of natural light. The roof is partially glazed with an enormous roof lantern, leaving the space feeling as though there is no roof there at all and creates a wonderful sense of openness.



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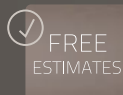
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NIGEL RIGDEN

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THE BASEMENT



SIMON MAXWELL

The Basement

Although usually accepted as spaces lit only by artificial means, this basement enjoys borrowed light from the ground floor thanks to a glazed open stairwell — yet any sound transferral is prevented by double-glazed doors. The emperor-sized mattresses mounted on wooden platforms ensures the room is one for kicking back in.



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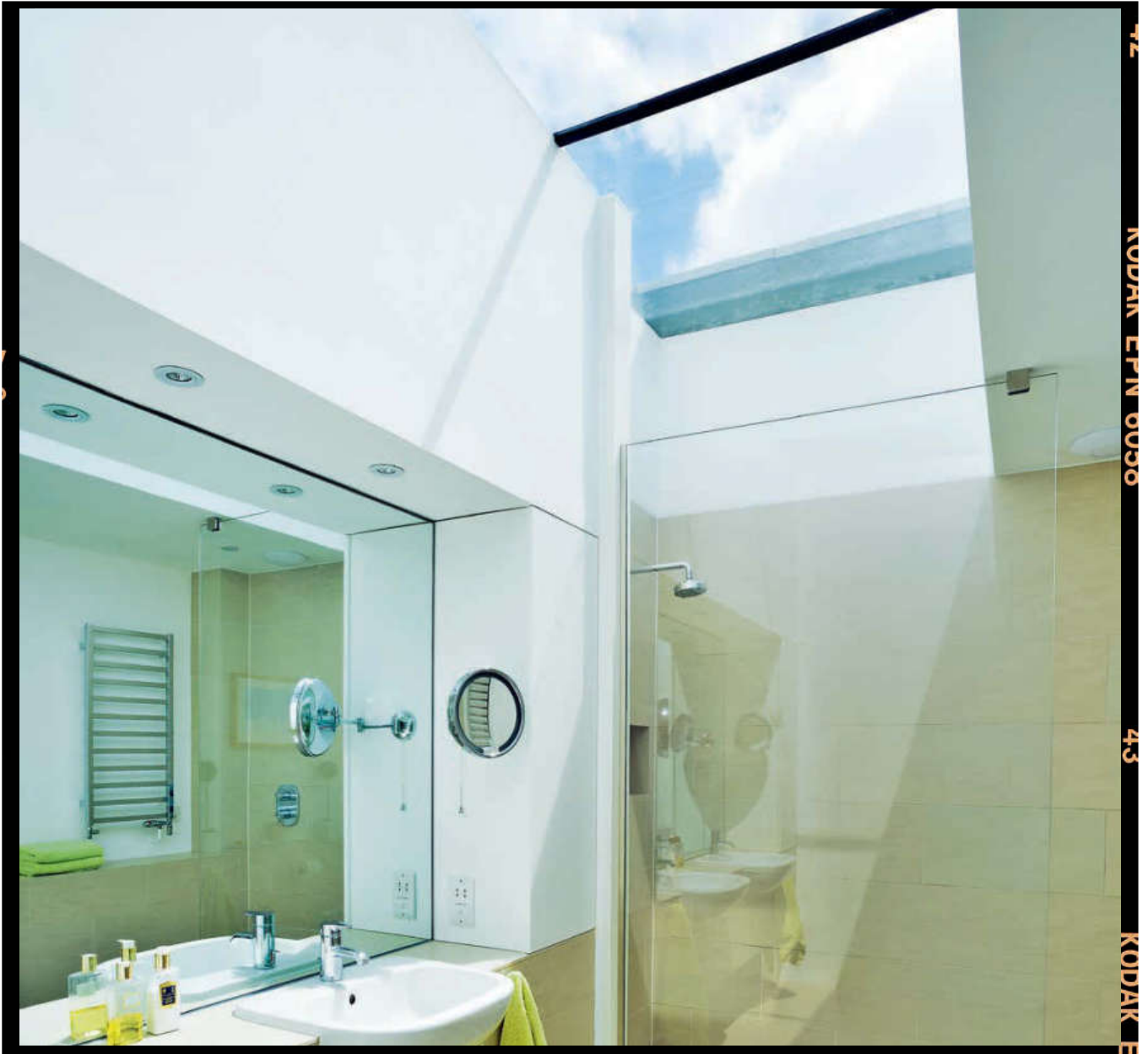
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THE BATHROOM



NIGEL RIGDEN

Showering Under the Stars

Topping the double walk-in showers in this contemporary bathroom with large minimalist rooflights serves to bring in plenty of light without compromising on privacy — plus who wouldn't want to shower under the stars on a clear night.

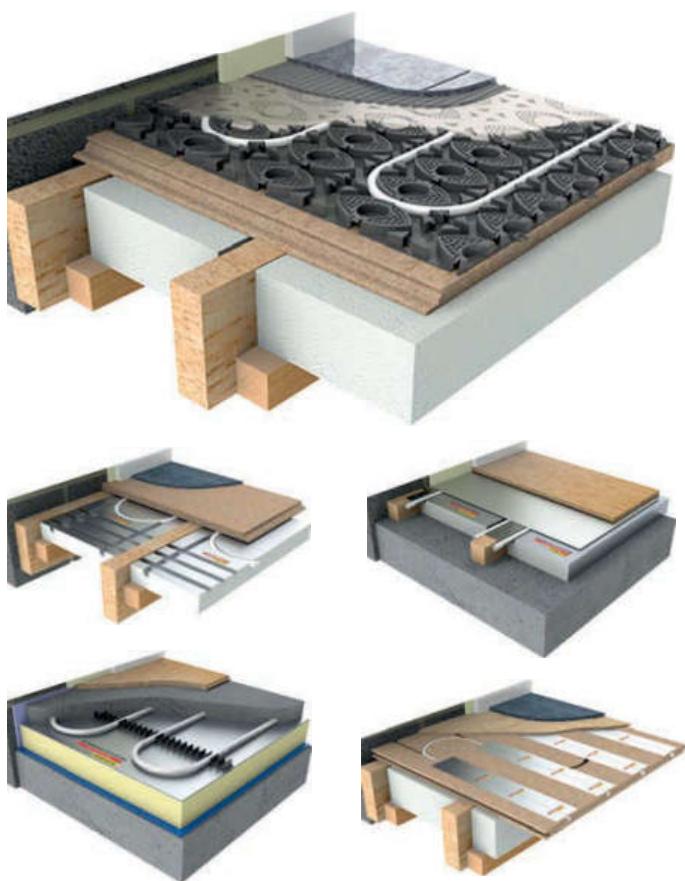


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THE DINING SPACE



SIMON MAXWELL

Twist on Tradition

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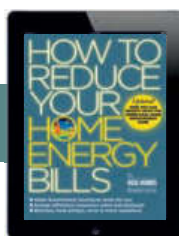
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THE DESIGNER'S VIEW FLAT REMODEL

City Style

A rundown Victorian 230m² flat in London has received a sympathetic update, which marries period style with contemporary flair, thanks to the team at London Atelier



IMAGES: LONDON ATELIER



RALF EIKELBERG
Ralf Eikelberg is Director
of architectural practice
London Atelier
(londonatelier.com)

HB&R: Did the client approach you with a specific brief for this home?

Ralf Eikelberg: The client approached us after we were recommended. We handle a lot of museum design projects as well as residential architecture and always try to capture the historical spirit of the property, which the clients were keen to see happen with their rundown Victorian flat in Maida Vale.

The client had a set of requirements, which included three generous bedrooms and retaining the period features. The property was in a very poor condition with a series of partition walls dividing up spaces and preventing light from reaching different rooms, meaning that we would need to open the spaces up. There was also dry rot and a lot of structural problems. Everything was wonky, the windows were single glazed and some walls of the flat had seven layers of plasterboard placed on top of one another, which was quite dangerous. Everything needed straightening up.





Front Façade

From the street-facing exterior, the property appears every bit the traditional Victorian home — hiding a contemporary interior within. Accessed via a staircase from the ground floor communal entrance hall, the three storey flat also benefits from an existing roof terrace with BBQ (partly visible here)



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THE DESIGNER'S VIEW FLAT REMODEL



Above: A New Staircase

In order to provide a greater connection between the second and third floors, the existing staircase was changed to a contemporary replacement with louvres and strip lights providing architectural interest

How did you approach the design process?

The flat is close to 230m² which is unusual for London and feels almost like a house with its three separate levels. The third floor however was not very well connected and so the existing staircase between the second and third floor was taken out and a new staircase – with louvres and strip lights – was introduced (shown left).

Everything internally was removed and we started from scratch. However, in order to maintain the historical envelope we played with the scheme by keeping the period features intact but customising the rest of the space; the fireplaces, skirting boards and the free-standing bath were all kept in order to enhance the Victorian look.

On the first level, the dividing partition walls were removed and there is now a large open plan living/kitchen space where plenty of light can flow through. The second level houses the master suite and a guest bedroom, and on the third level there is a third bedroom and a TV room, which could always be turned into another bedroom in the future if needed.

Every item of furniture in the home has been customised to meet the client's needs, too. For instance, the client wanted a boot room for storage and so we looked at the layout and decided to arrange the supporting rooms – including boot room, storage space, etc. – around the staircase which now acts as a spine for the property.

Were there any issues with the project?

The flat on the ground floor below was occupied and, along with planning permission, this was one of the challenges we faced. The property sits within the Maida Vale Conservation Area and so we had to respect the local authority's requirements when we applied ➡



THE DESIGNER'S VIEW FLAT REMODEL



for planning permission. Before we could even apply for planning though we had to gain approval from the neighbourhood association.

There were then issues with the freeholders and the Party Wall agreements needed sorting out. Luckily the client was very proactive with this. Once all of this was in place we started immediately and the project in total took 11 months. We took a risk, however, by putting work out to tender straight after applying for planning permission, before it had even been granted. We did as much as possible to get everything in place before we received permission to speed up the process. It was definitely the quickest way of doing things, but it was risky. Fortunately everything was fine — even the alterations we made to the existing roof terrace.

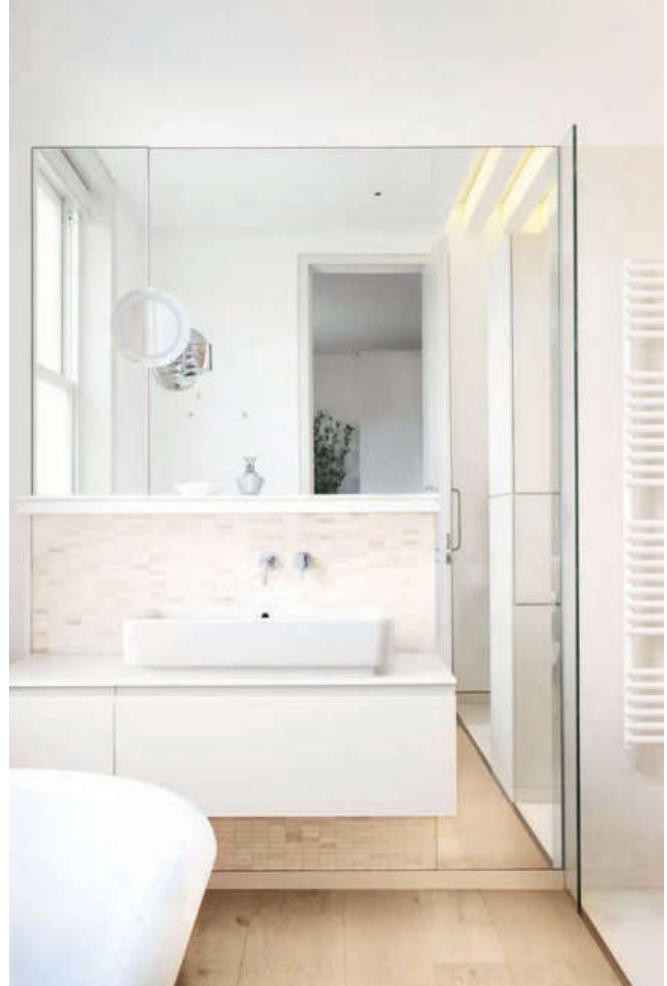
With the floor below there were conditions with the freeholders to achieve similar or better soundproofing values and we had to meet Building Regulations requirements, too. The client also wanted wood flooring and so we had to design this accordingly and had Building Control along with acoustic professionals on board.

What is your favourite element of the project?

The folding ladder leading to the established roof terrace is a really cool piece. Due to planning conditions it was impossible to extend the staircase to this level, and previously the roof terrace could only be accessed by a roof hatch and ladder which wasn't very stable. We came up with a folding aluminium contraption complete with handrail which pulls down and sits on pressurised pistons — much like a car boot door. It lifts back up when not in use so that it also doesn't disturb the layout of the third level accommodation. The new rooflight above opens electronically too so there is easy access to the terrace which benefits from a BBQ and views over the rooftops — five rooflights were also introduced in order to boost natural light.

How does the home meet the client's requirements?

We kept the spirit of the Victorian envelope and reopened the spaces to inject a new contemporary life without disturbing the historical structure. The home has been fully remodelled and the newly customised spaces have created a pleasant balance and sense of calm throughout. Even though the rooms are contemporary, everything has a traditional element — the clients are very happy. **H**



Below: Staircase Solutions

With planning conditions ruling out the possibility of extending the staircase up to the roof terrace, London Atelier devised a clever solution in the form of a folding aluminium ladder sitting on pressurised pistons which can be pulled down when required





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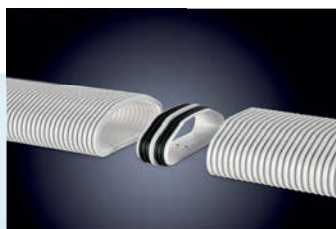
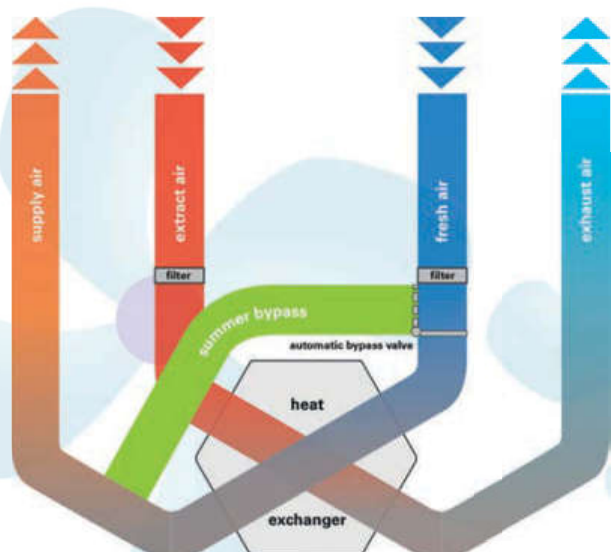
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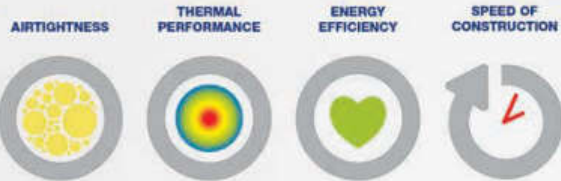
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Light From Above: How to Do it Right

We're all after ways of introducing more natural light into our homes — including roof glazing. But how do you choose the right option? Natasha Brinsmead explains



NATASHA BRINSMEAD
is our Associate Editor and an experienced renovator. She's in the middle of a major renovation and extension of an Edwardian home — a lot of it DIY

Below & Left: Innovative Glazing

Well-placed rooflights and roof glazing can transform rooms, as these products from Glazing Vision (left) and National Domelight Company (below) go to show

Getting in light from above is all the rage. Whereas the traditional rooflight is enjoying a renaissance in its own right on our pitched roofs — thanks to the boost in barn conversions brought about by changes in planning laws, and the continuing desire to make the most of loft spaces (even in self-builds) — even more remarkable is the trend for roof glazing and roof lanterns (or even just flush-fixed roof windows) on flat roofs. Ten years ago flat roofs were still a taboo subject in most housebuilding and extension circles, but now they are much more common — and they give a great opportunity to bring in natural light from above. We're placing them in all sorts of interesting ways (as the images on these pages show) — not just occasionally dotted in ceilings but above showers and baths (for that view of the stars) and living spaces, too.

It's hardly surprising that the whole roof window world is enjoying good times. A rooflight can bring in up to 40% more light than a dormer, but costs considerably less to install — this is a hugely effective way to introduce daylight through a flat or sloped roof. Rooflights bring in a very pure, white light that is wholly different to that brought in by regular windows, and installed in banks next to one another can also add a really interesting architectural feature.

As a general rule of thumb, you will need a glazed area equivalent to 10% of the room size to provide adequate natural daylighting, however results are even better if you can increase this to 20%. That aside, how do you make the right choice?

"A rooflight can bring in up to 40% more light than a dormer"



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DESIGN ROOFLIGHTS

Rooflights FAQs

What are my Options?

There are various styles of rooflight available, both fixed and opening — referred to as 'in plane' or 'out of plane', depending on whether they lie flush with the roof (as with the Velux-style product), or are raised lanterns. Roof lanterns can be found in various sculptural forms such as pyramids, pitched polygons, barrel vaults and vertical glazed panels.

Taken one step further, rooflights can become viewing boxes at the top of staircases, or openings to roof terraces — you can even specify flush, walk-on rooflights.

What are Conservation Rooflights?

In the case of houses in Conservation Areas or listed buildings, planning officers will often specify that conservation rooflights are used. These are especially designed with a low profile, meaning they sit completely flush with the roofline and do not detract from the character of the building (most standard 'in plane' rooflights still protrude a little).

Steel conservation rooflights are ideal as they are made specifically to provide sleek, slender sections. They are also designed to replicate original Victorian models — when they were invented, for agricultural buildings — and feature a glazing bar.



Will I Need Planning Permission for a New Rooflight?

Unless you live in a listed building or within a Conservation Area then it is unlikely that you will need to apply for planning permission to install a new rooflight.

You will, however, require Building Regulations approval. Building Control will be checking that the roof is able to carry the weight of the new rooflight and specify methods to strengthen it if necessary. The rooflight you choose will also have to prove that it has sufficient insulation against heat loss.

What Can I Expect to Pay for a Standard Rooflight?

The average cost of a 1m² rooflight would be around £1,000. Obviously you would need to factor in redecorating jobs as well as this. You can buy rooflights from DIY shops from as little as £100 but it is probably best to avoid them, as DIY jobs are famous for leaks and condensation. Roof lanterns will cost more.

How Will I Clean Them?

There are several ways in which rooflight

Trick of the Light

This rooflight from Glazing Vision (above) creates interesting light patterns within this extension, whereas this conservation rooflight from Lumen (below left) is designed specifically for period properties

manufacturers are trying to provide simple solutions to the question of how to clean rooflights.

At the most basic end of the spectrum you will just have to get up on the roof and use a good old-fashioned squeegee. However, should this not appeal, then you could opt for a rooflight that is hinged on a central pivot and can be turned inside out for easy cleaning.

Alternatively, many companies specify glazing such as Pilkington Activ™ self-cleaning glass as standard. A special coating on the glass reacts with ultra-violet rays from natural daylight to break down and disintegrate organic dirt. When rainwater hits the glass the loosened dirt is washed away.

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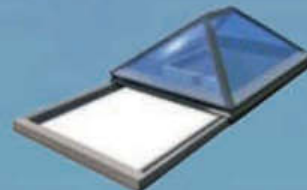


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DESIGN ROOFLIGHTS



Left to Right:

This conservation rooflight is from Lumen; Kloeber's flat-sealed glass units; Lumen's new Accoya rooflight; a Velux window in a loft conversion

Will I Need to Consider U Values?

Rooflights are treated the same as windows for Building Regulations purposes, meaning a typical maximum average U value of 1.6kW/m^2 . To achieve this, a combination of 6mm and 10mm toughened glass with an argon-filled cavity is commonly used, although this will depend on your supplier. A 'low-emissivity' coating on the glass will reduce U values further, while triple glazing will help improve thermal efficiency, as well as offering good soundproofing.

Will Overheating Be An Issue?

If you are worried about overheating – and this is certainly something to consider in south-facing rooms with large amounts of glazing – take a look at solar control glass. According to the experts it can help to reduce glare by up to 72%.

Using a tinted glass, such as blue or bronze, can also reduce glare – but on the downside will have an impact on the amount of light entering your home.

Why Does Water Pool Around Rooflights on Flat Roofs?

If you are installing a rooflight on a flat roof, you should ensure that the upstand along the perimeter is at least 15mm high in order to avoid flooding.

"Our rooflights are designed to sit on an upstand section which lifts the rooflight up off the roof," explains Matt Trace, Director at Lumen. "In turn, this upstand also provides a slight pitch to allow water to run across the face of the glass rather than pooling in the middle."

Whatever the material or position of your rooflights, they must be fitted to allow water to drain away. Weather-resistant flashings can be visually obtrusive but are essential to avoid leaks.

Left: Sunroof Style

This remote controlled sliding rooflight slides back fully into its recess – a rain sensor prevents disaster when the weather turns

How Close Together Can Rooflights be Placed?

Using rows or 'banks' of several rooflights together is a great idea, but you will need to take into consideration your roof construction and consult with your builder (or in some cases – and particularly in renovations – a structural engineer, as removing sections of the roof structure will weaken the roof).

"Our pitched rooflights can be linked side-by-side and the flat rooflights can be spaced very closely together," says Matt Trace. "Alternatively we can make large single-framed bespoke rooflights."

Who Will Install Them?

There are three ways you can buy and install a rooflight. You could buy from a supplier and then hire a builder to install it for you, or – and this might be best for those with a more complicated design idea – you could hire a specialist company to design and fit it for you. It is also possible to install a rooflight yourself, however it is usually advised against, as rooflights can leak and attract condensation if poorly made or incorrectly installed.

If you want maximum impact for minimal cost, consider installing a rooflight at the top of your stairwell – it will flood the house with light. Builders simply cut a hole in your roof, box in the roof cavity and then fit the rooflight. This option would cost about £350 for the boxing and £1,000 for the rooflight. Typical prices range from £1,000-£3,000 for the larger rooflights. **H**



Newly Launched

The brand new Ellesmere stove from AGA costs from £795



What's New In Woodburners

Natasha Brinsmead uncovers the latest trends; meanwhile, Jason Orme and Ben Field provide guides to efficient operation — and installation

Compact Chic

Charnwood's C-Four comes in a range of colours — a DEFRA-exempt model is also available for burning wood in smoke control areas. Prices start from £780



Cosy Centrepiece

Clearview's 650 woodburning stove with high canopy — with Clearview's hot air-wash system. This version costs £1,884



ADVICE WOODBURNERS

1 ELECTRONIC IGNITION

Lancashire-based Esse has just launched an industry first — their latest product Auto-Blaze is an ingenious electronic ignition system for woodburning stoves. Simply load your dry logs in front of the air jet, close the door, press the remote and the five to eight minute lighting cycle begins.

There's no need for kindling, and as well as being clean and safe, it is also a great solution for 'cold flue' or poor-draught installations.

2 COOL TOUCH CONTROLS

Hands up how many of you have forgotten that stove handles and controls get very hot? The new cool touch controls available take care of the problem, so you can safely pop another log on the fire without risking your fingers or clumsily fiddling around with heatproof gloves.

3 INTEGRATED LOG STORES

Stoves with storage for logs beneath or to one side have become increasingly popular in recent times. Not only do they look great but they also make practical sense, keeping logs to hand and eliminating the need for a separate log basket — useful for those short on space or aiming for a more minimalist look.

4 CLEAN BURN AIRWASH

A really useful feature on many new stove models, this controls and directs the air coming into the stove. Any volatile by-products emitted by burning your fuel are reignited and burnt again. What this means is reduced emissions, less ash deposits and more heat for less fuel. It also keeps your chimney cleaner and your glass doors beautifully clear.

Cooking Options

The Esse Ironheart cookstove can also be specified with a domestic hot water boiler. It costs £3,910



5 THE OUTDOOR WOODBURNER

Woodburners are not just for inside your home — the idea has now been transported outside too, with some pretty striking designs. Most models of outdoor woodburner, such as the stylish Firestone from Esse (right), double up as pizza ovens or barbecues, as well as providing a cosy heat, extending your enjoyment of evenings in your garden beyond the summer months. They also come with handy features such as extended fluepipes to take smoke well away from where you are sitting and rain shields meaning they can be enjoyed in all weathers.



Above: The Esse Firestone reaches temperatures of up to 550°C and costs £1,799.99

Left: The Morsø Kamino outdoor fireplace costs approximately £999



THE EXPERT'S VIEW



Declan Walsh,
Managing Director
of Morsø UK gives
his opinion on the
changes currently
taking place in the
industry

How have buying habits changed within the stove sector in the past five years, and what are the latest trends?

"The trend now has changed from traditional stoves to modern, contemporary freestanding stoves that are a focal point in the room. The UK consumer now wants lots of glass with as much viewing of the flames as possible. Curved models are also very popular, and serve as functional pieces of furniture"

With oil prices now falling, why would anyone install a woodburning stove?

"While energy prices are currently falling it is also worth remembering that they were a lot higher not too long ago and chances are they may be again. Burning wood is environmentally friendly as it is carbon neutral. In addition there is a certain 'co-siness' – something the Danes refer to as 'hygge' – that comes from sitting in front of a crackling wood fire that is missing from a gas or electric version."

What are the latest technical innovations in the stove world?

"The modern stove is efficient, clean-burning and environmentally friendly. The next big thing in the UK may be pellet stoves – which can be set up to come on and off on timers like a heating system."



Small But Perfect

The elegant 1410 Squirrel
from Morsø costs £864



All White

The Mendip 8 in Ivory costs
approximately £1,848

6 COLOURED STOVES

Black is no longer your only option when it comes to woodburning stoves. Coloured enamel models are now widely available, making them easy to coordinate with any interior scheme – from country creams and duck egg blues, to vivid reds and yellows.

7 STOVES WITH COOKING FEATURES

Harking back to the cooking ranges of old, some models of woodburner now come with hot plates and simmering plates on top, useful for boiling a kettle or warming drinks.

8 COMPACT & FUSS FREE

According to Chris Baines, Managing Director of Eurostove, the current trend is for fuss free, modern designs, with curved front proving particularly popular right now. "The 5kW size is by far the most popular size, as that suits the smaller rooms found in the majority of houses in the UK," he says.



Woodburner with Wow

The La Nordica Fireball
from Ludlow Stoves rotates
90° and costs £2,371





9 SMOKE FREE

"We've seen increased interest in DEFRA-exempt models that can legally be used for wood burning in smoke-control zones which affects most towns and cities in the UK," says Matt Kisler from Dimplex. There are 100s of smoke control areas in the UK. Local authorities maintain their own lists, but if you live in a town or city, chances are you live in one. It means you need to use a DEFRA 'exempt appliance': i.e. a stove specially designed to emit less smoke. A full list is at smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk.



Smoke Exempt

The Bellingham 12 from Dimplex is a DEFRA 'exempt appliance' to allow woodburning in UK smoke control areas and costs

Above: Traditional Looks

The Little Wenlock from AGA costs approximately £525

Here: Contemporary and Curved

The Morsø 7443, shown with log storage, costs £2,253



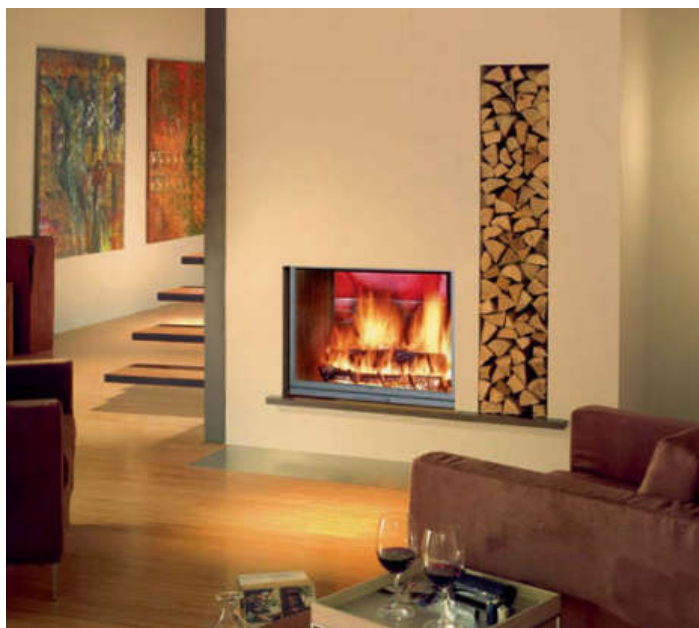
10 KNOW WHAT TO BURN

The efficiency of your stove is down to several things but, perhaps most of all, what you actually burn in it. The calorific value of timber does vary slightly from timber to timber but it's actually the moisture content (MC) that has the biggest impact on how many kWh you get out of each log. "It is important for the health of your stove, flue and heat output that you burn wood that is 25 per cent MC or below. How you get to that, either by buying kiln dried, or buying wetter wood and allowing it to dry out, is down to your storage facilities and personal preference," says Logs Direct's Liz Foulds.

Classic Style

The Cove 3 from Charnwood comes in a choice of eight colours and is priced at approximately £2,298





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IS WOOD A COST-EFFECTIVE FUEL?

The key to success depends on the fuel you're buying — which most people give remarkably little thought to. For a start, hardwood logs are denser than softwoods and you'll receive more kWh from a cubic metre bag of hardwoods than softwoods — but softwoods are usually cheaper. While the type of wood offers a variable in output, it's not massive — by far the biggest impact is moisture content.

The table below is a very general guide to how moisture content affects kWh output.

Moisture content	Approx. kWh/kg
10% (kiln dried/brickettes)	5
30%	3.5
40%	3
50% (freshly cut)	2.5

Most merchants sell in cubic metre bags but the weight of these bags will vary depending largely on the moisture content. So kiln dried logs (where the moisture is below 10%) will cost £120-£140 per cubic metre bag. But the weight of these will be just 250kg. A bag of 'seasoned' logs where the moisture content (MC) can still be up to as much as 30%, even after 12 months of air drying, will weigh on average 300kg per cubic metre bag and cost you between £70 and £90. A cubic metre of freshly cut logs would come in at 500kg with a moisture content of 50% and be cheapest at £50 per bag.

So let's work out the relative values of those different options based on the above assumptions.

Type of log	Cost/kg	Cost/kWh
Fresh (50% MC)	10p	4p (at 2.5kWh/kg)
Seasoned (25%)	26p	6.5p (at 4kWh/kg)
Dried/brickettes (10%)	52p	10.4p (at 5kWh/kg)

So, perhaps surprisingly, the figures show that the differences in price between dried and freshly cut logs are not usually reflected in the improved outputs you'll receive (by paying more for dried). The best option is to store as much wood as you can and dry it out over two to three years. The trick is to buy cheap bags of freshly cut logs (at £50-£70 per bag) and then let them dry out to boost output to 4-5kWh/kg. You'll then be enjoying costs of around 2p-3p/kWh.

In terms of your annual heat demand figure, heating a typical room to say 4kW all day (24 hours) would have used up 96kWh of energy — the equivalent of £4.32 at current gas prices (that's assuming, of course, that the heating isn't very well controlled and you lose a lot of heat). The cost for a woodburner to do the same (based on the above figures) would be £3.84-£9.60, or as little as £2 if you can dry logs yourself over two to three years.



HOW TO INSTALL A WOODBURNING STOVE

Ben Field provides a guide. Always use a HETAS-registered installer

There are hundreds of models available and a number of ways to install them — here, we look at installing a Clearview Pioneer Oven stove with a twin-wall flue. Before I bought my stove I asked James Isaac, my HETAS-registered installer, to survey the room to advise on flue positioning. (Some installers may charge for a survey, but most will refund this fee if you go on to have a woodburning stove fitted.)



1 James starts the job by positioning and levelling up the woodburning stove. The floor is made from a non-combustible material (tiles) so no hearth is required underneath for this installation.



2 An exploratory hole — in line with the flue outlet on the stove — is made in the ceiling above. The survey showed that there is a suitable gap between the joists at this point, but care still needs to be taken to avoid wiring or pipework. The hole is expanded, and after a careful inspection with a torch, no wiring or pipe-work is found. (If wires and/or pipes are in the way, you'll need to bring in other tradespeople to reroute them.) With the way clear on this installation, James offers up the flue pipe from the burner to mark an accurate cut line on the ceiling.



3 A jigsaw is used to cut out the hole in the ceiling for the flue.



4 The twin-wall flue is being routed through the house. The survey showed that a roof joist would be in the way after the flue passed through the room above. So, the plasterboard is cut away and with the joist supported, a section is removed.



5 The roof joists above and below the one cut are 'tied' into it with new lengths of joist with brackets on the top and bottom. Long screws go through the centre of the new lengths of joist and into the cut ends on either side. By doing this, the strength lost by cutting the joist is reinstated.



6 After marking a central hole for the flue inside, James then goes on to mark out the circular cut line on the roof tiles and cuts it out with an angle grinder.



7 A lead roof cowl is then introduced; the flue pipe will eventually emerge through it towards the end of the installation. The cowl is slid under the tiles to create a weatherproof barrier.



8 James uses fireboard to box in the space between the floor and ceiling where the flue will pass. This prevents heat radiated from the flue causing damage to the surrounding joists.



9 James taps the outlet pipe into the top of the woodburning stove (left) and then lowers the twin-wall flue down from the room above (right). Should the woodburning stove need to be moved for any reason in the future, the upper section of pipe can be lifted up to allow this.



10 A firestop needs to be fitted where the flue enters the first floor, with any combustible materials, like carpet, cut back to meet the edges of the firestop.



11 James fits the section of the twin-wall flue that goes through the roof and secures it with a rafter support.



12 Out on the roof, the most precarious part of the job comes with the fitting of the top section of the flue. James has pre-assembled the pipe on the ground using steel locking bands to hold it together. Another locking band secures the top pipe to the section emerging from the roof. The top of the flue is required to project 600mm above the ridge of the roof.



13 Plasterboard is cut, shaped and screwed to the joists where the flue pipe goes through the ceiling in the room above the woodburning stove — a skim of plaster will be needed over the joints later on.



14 Where a flue pipe enters a room from floor to ceiling, as here, there needs to be a physical barrier to prevent it from coming into contact with combustible materials. The cage fitted here is a simple (if inelegant) solution. Another option would be to box the pipe in using fireboard.



15 James sprays the flue with dedicated stove paint to match the woodburning stove. With stoves available in a number of different colours, this is a cost-effective way to get everything looking just right.



16 The final job is to light and test the woodburning stove. James runs through the lighting procedure and then lets the unit get up to temperature before signing it off and supplying the necessary HETAS certification. A magnetic surface thermometer indicates the performance of the woodburning stove — this one is quickly up to the ideal 260°C running temperature, indicating an efficient clean burn. **H**

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How to Handle Builders' Merchants

How do you act like a builder and get the best prices from your materials suppliers? Peter Eade explains



PETER EADE

Peter Eade has spent a lifetime running his own building business, specialising in project management and design

Almost all of us will end up buying a significant portion of the building materials that will end up going into our completed self-builds or renovated homes. Everything from windows to bricks, floor coverings to cement could be handled not by our builders, but by us. Which is great in some ways – you'll be much more motivated to negotiate discounts rather than a builder working on your behalf – and worrying in others. Building is still in many ways a closed shop, meaning outsiders tend to get befuddled by jargon and excluded from the best deals ('trade counters') being one example.

For most building materials, builders' merchants are the key contact. Buying materials from builders' merchants is somewhat different from the way normal shopping is done. It would be unusual, to say the least, to roll up to the checkout at the super- ➤➤

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“As a self-builder or renovator it’s important to think like a builder — and expect discounts comparable with those being offered to the trades”

market and try to negotiate the price you would like to pay. With builders’ merchants things can be a little different.

As a self-builder or renovator it’s important to think like a builder — and expect discounts comparable with those being offered to the trades. Before any work can start, all materials should be calculated and quantities listed, at least to the point where the structure is built and the roof is on. Some merchants offer a take-off service where you deposit the plans with them and they will quantify all of the materials and provide a quotation. This may seem like a good idea but in reality it is not necessarily the case. Even as a newcomer you will have a much firmer grip on the build process if you have identified and measured the quantities of materials yourself — and remember that the merchant who has done the calculations is, quite legitimately, going to expect to receive all of the orders.

Know Which Merchants to Target

It’s probably worth checking what merchants there are locally and then visiting each one to get an idea of what type of products they hold in stock. There are usually a smattering of the bigger names (Jewson, Travis Perkins, etc.) and a local or regional independent (e.g. Ridgeons in the East of England). Some just have trade counters with a wide range of products much like a superstore — others have yards full of heavy-side goods, bricks, tiles and blocks. By being aware of what each merchant sells you will know which one to visit when something is needed in a hurry. If it’s important to know the likely expenditure for all of the materials before any work begins, get in a preliminary quotation for everything from just one merchant — this may be particularly useful if you are working on borrowed funding. But don’t forget at this early stage that any quotations received can only be considered as guide prices: a merchant’s quotes are only current for a limited period and may well have changed by the time the orders are placed.

As someone who will be buying in quite large quantities it makes economic sense to open a trading account. If at all possible have accounts with at least three suppliers. However, getting a credit account is not quite as easy as it once was and it may well be that the merchant will only offer a trade card. By having this card a customer’s information goes on a merchant’s system and some sort of trade discount may be available, but the discounts tend to be quite small. If you become an account customer it’s likely you will get to know a merchant’s sales representative. Merchants’ reps work to get in orders (being incentivised to do so) and they have the authority to negotiate competitive prices.

Ordering

Before asking for quotes or placing any orders, it’s important to check there are not any availability problems — from time to

time various materials have extended lead times (brick being the most notable recent example, although these issues have been largely resolved). Bear in mind the brick, block and tile deliveries are likely to come direct from the manufacturer with a merchant only acting as the distributor. When the time comes to get in quotations, make a quantified list of all the materials that will be required for each phase of the build process. If possible, make an appointment with each merchant’s sales representative — this way you are likely to get the most competitive quote. It’s important to give identical information to each to ensure all of the quotations will be based upon the same quantities of the same materials. If the merchants you have accounts with don’t have sales reps then you can phone or email your quotation enquiry. Once the quotations are received, go through them and highlight the most competitive price for each item.

There is no obligation to place all of the orders with just one trader — whoever is offering the lowest quote for each individual product should get the order. It’s possible each merchant’s quote will be followed up by a further visit from the rep or perhaps a phone call to enquire if their quote is going to be accepted. Depending on your negotiating skills this is a good opportunity to try for further reductions — just state the truth if some items seem overpriced. Once the initial orders have been placed and the project is underway, remember to regularly check the status of the materials on site in order to ensure there are no hold ups.

Other Outlets

In addition to using builders’ merchants there are companies who specialise in specific building products; often these firms can be very competitive when it comes to buying items such as lintels, insulation, roof tiles, etc. Structural timber for the joists and roof tend to be cheaper if bought from dedicated timber merchants. Don’t overlook the big DIY stores either — as occasionally they have loss leaders when they sell specific items at knockdown prices. One option, particularly for those living in the south-east, is a trip to the DIY superstores in Calais, where many UK self-builders claim to be able to enjoy significant discounts on many items, from sanitaryware to timber.

Going Direct

Increasingly, self-builders and renovators are able to buy big-ticket (and small-ticket) items directly from suppliers (most of the names you see advertising in the magazine prefer this, and if not they’ll put you in touch with local merchants). Again, don’t be afraid to negotiate and contact several suppliers of similar products to gain a competitive edge. Once you’ve got detailed plans, be ready to send them off to as many suppliers as possible. That’s what a builder would do, and it’s what self-builders and renovators looking to save money should do too. **H**



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For self-builders,
and increasingly
renovators,
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is becoming the
de facto standard.
But how do
you get it right?
Tim Pullen explains

ADVICE UNDERFLOOR HEATING



TIM PULLEN

An expert in sustainable building and energy efficiency, Tim runs the green home consultancy Weather Works

Running your warm water through pipes under the floor is a favoured option of many self-builders. The benefits are well-known: a steady, background heat, perceived reductions in energy use and, of course, no radiators — which, in this era of ‘big glass’ (rather than walls to hang them off) solves a tricky design problem.

Underfloor heating (UFH) is now also a serious and cost-effective option for anyone carrying out major work to their home. But it requires a joined-up approach and involves you, as the homeowner, making some key decisions. Thanks to innovations in this little part of the housing world, the assumed problems — What would you do if something went wrong? Isn't it expensive? And, as a renovator, what are the implications for my existing home? — are becoming less of a consideration than they were 10 years ago (the answers, by the way, are a) the only things that go wrong are at the pipe connections and they're all above ground; b) about as expensive as ‘designer’ radiators; and c) turn the pages to find out).

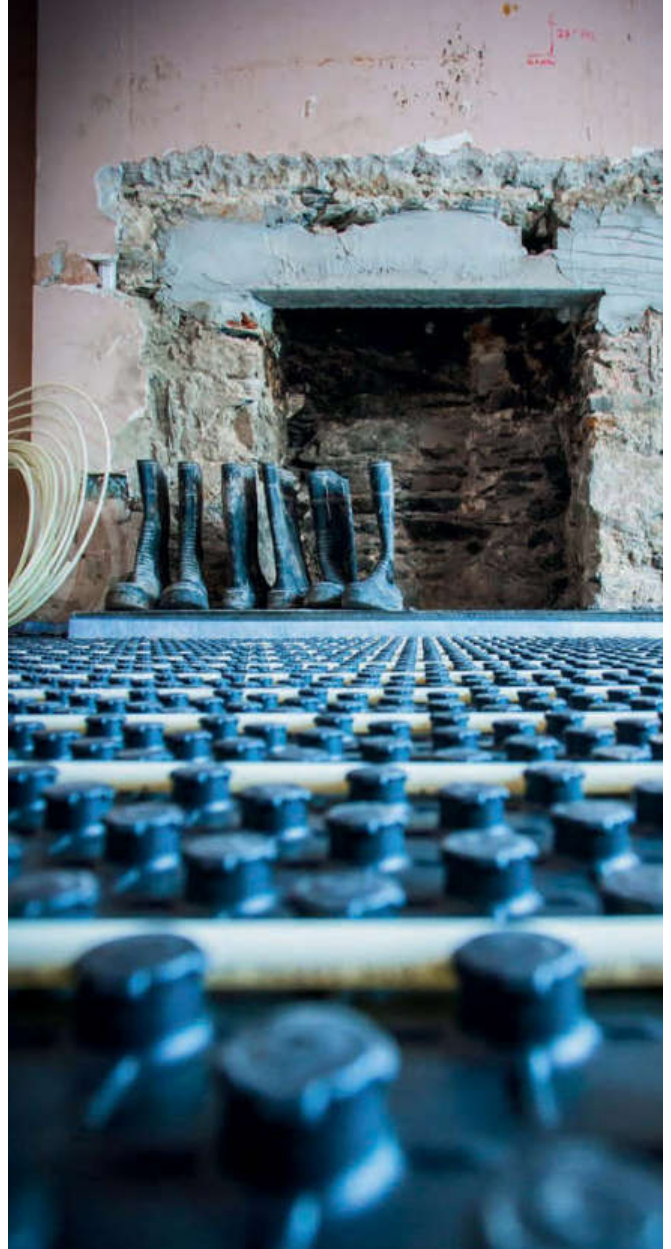
UNDERFLOOR HEATING TYPES

Wet systems involve standard or small bore pipes full of water powered by a boiler (or heat pump). The heat is generated through the pipes and the floor effectively acts as a large radiator.

Electric systems are popular solutions where underfloor heating is preferred in a single room (such as a conservatory or bathroom). Given the relative expense of electricity it is not usually a sensible option for larger projects.

UFH in Old Homes

The advent of low-profile water underfloor heating — with thinner pipes and special conducting screeds — has made underfloor heating a viable option for renovators. Systems include Nu-Heat's LoPro™Max (right)



COSTS: COMPARING THE SYSTEMS

As an example, a 25m² room built to current Building Regulations is likely to need 1.25kW to heat it, which would equate to around 1,700kWh per year. Assuming electricity at 13p per kWh, electric UFH will cost £219 per year. The same room with wet UFH, assuming a gas boiler operating at 90 per cent efficiency and mains gas at 6p per kWh, will cost £113 per year to heat. The capital cost of the electric system will be around £350-£400 and the wet system £500-£650.



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Installation

UNDERFLOOR HEATING IN EXISTING HOMES

The problem with installing UFH to existing houses is that it tends to take up a lot of space. In the good old days, 20mm insulation under UFH was considered enough. In the 1990s that moved to 50mm and now 100mm is considered the minimum. Add 75mm of screed and a floor covering and the floor level rises by close to 200mm — with obvious implications for various fixtures, not least of which will be door head height.

As a consequence, a number of low-profile systems have been developed, like the Nu-Heat LoPro™10 and LoPro™Max that can be laid on top of existing concrete or suspended timber floors. The standard height for low-profile UFH is 15mm, so maybe 25mm to 40mm to include the floor covering. Brent Witherspoon, Managing Director of Chelmer Heating Solutions, says: "The low-profile systems work well, but the best ones are the ones that use high-density insulation."

"New low-profile systems have made UFH a realistic option for renovators"

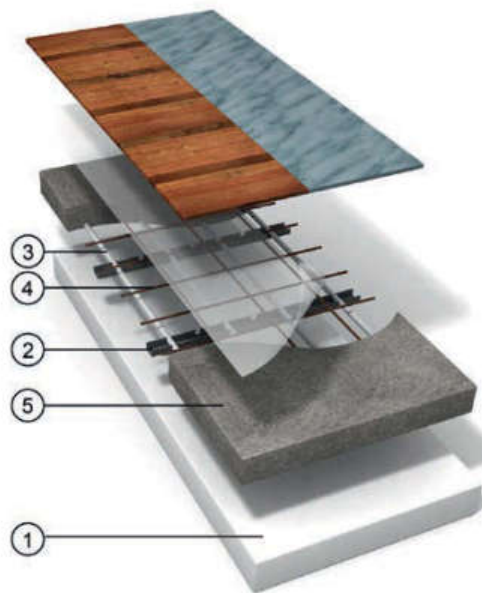
Low-profile systems tend to have smaller diameter pipes and run at a higher temperature. The impact of this is that the floor will heat up and cool down far more quickly than conventional UFH. Where UFH is added to an existing radiator system then a different control system will be needed. Luckily wireless thermostats (some of which can be controlled with a phone app) make installation far easier.

Installing UFH to a new build is now a well-trodden path. There are many specialist suppliers and systems for both concrete and timber floors. Insulation is important and on the ground floor this will be no

less than 100mm of rigid foam. For upper floors, less insulation (50mm) can be used as any heat escaping through it will serve to warm the floor below.

UFH by its nature is a zonal system as each room will have its own pipe run. UFH therefore lends itself to precise time and temperature control for each room — the most efficient means of running a whole house heating system.

A BUILD-UP EXAMPLE



This example, from Anderson Floor Warming shows Anderson's pipe (it can be 16mm or 20mm depending on the specification) in a typical screed floor construction for a new build. Anderson also provide a range of solutions for the retrofit market based around slotted-in board systems.

1. Insulation (above floor slab and damp-proof membrane)
2. Clip rail
3. Pipe
4. Reinforcement (not always required)
5. Screed (usually 70mm)

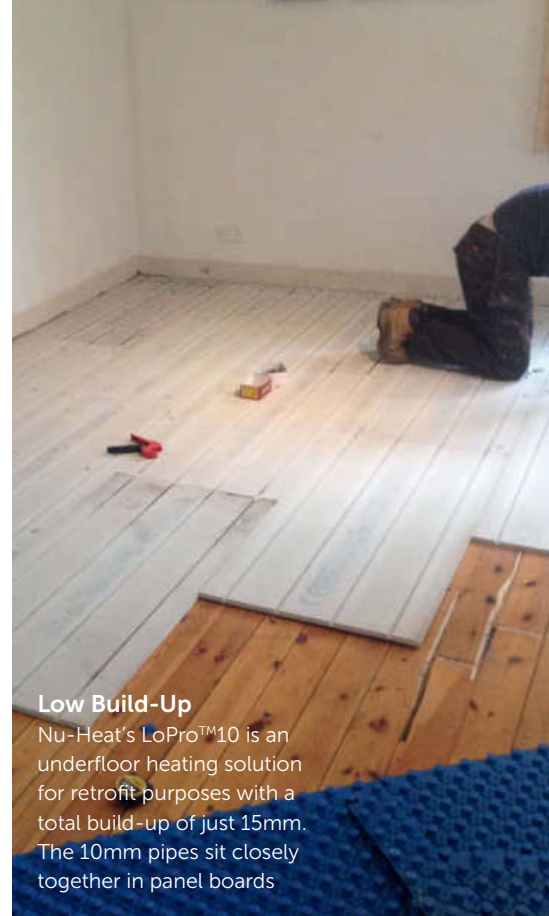
SCREEDS

Convention dictates a 60mm to 75mm thick sand and cement screed, usually with glass-fibre reinforcement. The screed acts as the heat sink (or radiator) and at that thickness gives a two to three hour heat up and cool down time.

The alternative is a flow screed. The characteristics of this option means it can

be restricted to 40mm thickness, giving a warm-up time of less than one hour. Flow screeds offer better thermal conductivity than sand and cement, and being thinner and lighter means that they can be suitable for renovations and new build.

Both offer a different approach to timing the operation of the system.



Low Build-Up

Nu-Heat's LoPro™10 is an underfloor heating solution for retrofit purposes with a total build-up of just 15mm. The 10mm pipes sit closely together in panel boards

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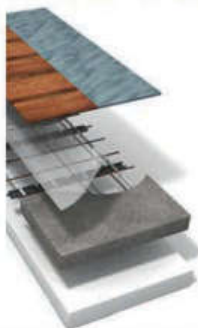
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Costs & Tips



Left: Cheaper to Run?

Lower flow temperatures tend to result in modest lower running costs for underfloor heating



IN PRAISE OF THE BUFFER TANK

There are two main reasons for using a buffer tank; the first is due to the low heat demand in a newly built house. A modern 200m² house will have a heat demand of 6kW to 8kW and what heat is needed will be largely at 40°C — whereas the gas boiler will be producing 20kW at 70°C. The boiler will then short-cycle (switch on and off a lot) and not reach the temperature needed to operate in condensing mode, reducing boiler efficiency by up to 20 per cent. A buffer tank allows the UFH to take heat when it is needed and for the boiler to run on longer cycles.

A buffer tank (Viessmann's Vitocel, above) also allows the addition of other heat sources — solar thermal, woodburners, etc. A good cylinder with appropriate controls allows multiple heat sources to be properly integrated.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO INSTALL — AND TO RUN?

Suppliers are, perhaps rightly, reluctant to give a 'standard' or 'average' price. Situations vary and as UFH is always bespoke the price varies too. The best we can get is something between £15-£30/m² for a standard wet system, varying with size and quality. According to Roy Pooley from The Underfloor Heating Store, the greater the floor coverage, the lower the marginal costs. "The pump costs the same regardless of room size — so whereas the piping costs on a high output 80m² single room system are as low as £11/m², a 10m² room would cost about £40/m²." The LoPro™Max from Nu-Heat, which is specifically designed for renovations, costs around £1,200 for a 15m² room. The typical price for UFH for an average 100m² floor area is around £2,000-£3,000.

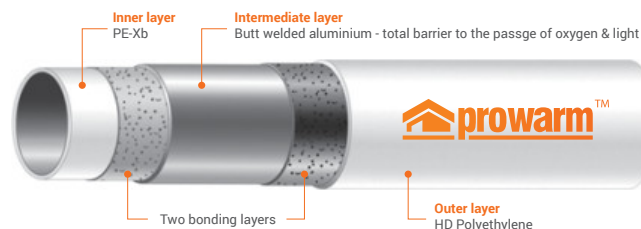
Perhaps the biggest benefit is that UFH heats from the floor up, rather than from the ceiling down, as radiators do. This means that the room begins to feel warmer sooner and that the thermostat can be turned down a degree or two. The Energy Saving Trust say that a 10°C reduction in room temperature brings a 10 per cent saving on the energy bill.

Wet systems typically run at 40°C to 50°C, meaning a heat pump can operate at peak efficiency. "An underfloor heating system is more effective in supplying an even heat over the whole room as opposed to a radiator which is sending heat straight up to the ceiling and then connecting it around the room — and would therefore be more cost-effective," says Roy Pooley.

"Typical prices are in the region of £2,000-£3,000 for an 'average' (100m²) floor area"

THE RIGHT PIPE

UFH pipes come in two forms: single-layer and multi-layer or multi-skin. Single-layer is a simple plastic pipe; multi-skin is usually made up of five layers, the inner and outer layers being PE-RT (a form of polyethylene) sandwiching a layer of aluminium. The latter type of pipe is easier to bend, retains its shape better and is more puncture resistant. The pipe must always be pressure tested before the screed is laid — and full of water while the screed is being laid.



How to Choose

"Studies show lighter carpet works better than previously imagined with UFH"



FLOOR COVERINGS



Tiles, stone or similar are generally accepted as the optimum covering. They absorb heat rather than insulate and allow that heat to radiate into the room.

Wood will tend to insulate and reduce efficiency, but thinner profile engineered timber has little noticeable impact on heat output. Solid timber is notoriously tricky with underfloor heating — it needs to be acclimatised for around a month. Ask your supplier for advice.



Carpet is generally considered a no-no, but the Carpet Foundation carried out some research in conjunction with the Underfloor

Heating Manufacturers Association which seems to show that some carpets can be used with UFH. The research showed that a carpet and underlay with a thermal resistance of less than 2.5 togs does not have a significant impact on efficiency.

Whatever floor covering is to be used, it is a good idea to tell the UFH designer so that the pipe layout can be properly specified. **H**

DECIDING BETWEEN SUPPLIERS

"The best advice I can give is to make sure the people you are talking to have in-depth knowledge of the total UFH system," says Brent Witherspoon, Managing Director of Chelmer Heating Solutions. "There is a significant design requirement with UFH, more than with a radiator system, as it is always possible to fit a bigger or smaller radiator, but once the UFH is installed it is there for good." Which cannot really be argued with.

There are issues around the quality of the materials; there will always be cheap and cheerful options and better quality, more expensive pipes, fittings and controls. But the efficiency and ultimate success of the system will depend on the quality of the design. Therefore choosing a supplier with good design and backup services is at least as important that the system itself.

FOR A FULL LIST OF UFH SUPPLIERS See page 191 or visit homebuilding.co.uk/sourcebook

Time's up for Rads...

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For the last 200 years radiators and other forms of conventional heating, have been wasting energy by heating your ceiling before they heat you!

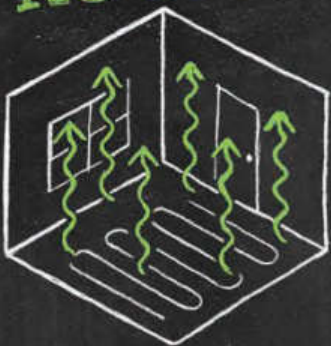
Well those days are gone - Wunda's new and revolutionary **'Easy Fit' overfloor heating** delivers luxurious comfort and saves fuel by producing usable, even heat, just underfoot - exactly where we need it.

With Wunda 'Easy Fit', **there's no need to dig up existing floors**, it's affordable, economical, extremely comfortable and no more difficult to install than laying carpet tiles. So, if you're upgrading, extending, renovating or building new - visit our website, watch the videos and see if you agree, that after 200 years - **Time's up for Radiators!**

TILES
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WOOD?

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floor covering*

ROOM BY ROOM



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ADVERTORIAL

Nu-Heat Underfloor Heating & Renewables

An efficient heating system that offers superior comfort levels and saves you both energy and money, underfloor heating (UFH) is the obvious choice for any new build, extension or renovation project.

UFH is an 'invisible' heating system that works by pumping a controlled flow of warm water from any heat source, such as a boiler or heat pump, through tubing hidden beneath or laid in panels directly on top of the existing floor.

The extensive range of UFH systems from Nu-Heat means that virtually any project can now enjoy the benefits of UFH — whether you're building from scratch, looking to install UFH on the ground or first floors, extending or converting.

Cost and Efficiency


As the surface area of the floor is so much larger than that of a radiator, UFH can run at a lower flow temperature. When paired with a modern condensing boiler, UFH is cheaper to run and approximately 25% more efficient than radiators. And, with a heat pump, is up to 40% cheaper to run. You can even enjoy warm water UFH that heats up as quickly as a radiator, giving an instant and consistent warmth, at one-third of the running cost of electric UFH.

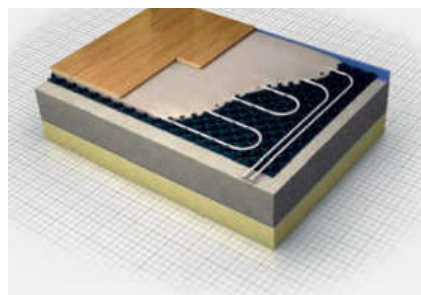
Top Tips for Creating your Perfect Heating Solution

⇒ Design is important: A good bespoke design will always take into account insulation, heat losses and chosen floor coverings, providing a solution that performs as expected.

⇒ Support when you need it: Installing UFH is pretty simple, but support from your supplier can make all the difference if you have any questions, from how components are installed to how the system is controlled.

⇒ Look for a renewables expert: There are various criteria that must be met to qualify for the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payment, so source an experienced supplier that will make sure the system complies.

A good supplier like Nu-Heat will be helpful and honest, giving you all of the information and advice you need to decide on a solution that will work for you and your home. For more information, speak to one of our experts on 01404 540650 or visit nu-heat.co.uk. 



Above:

Here, Nu-Heat's LoPro™Max underfloor heating has been installed as a retrofit solution within a renovation project

Extension Project Step-by-Step Planner

What does a typical extension project look like? What are the critical paths and construction schedule? Here's our week-by-week guide and checklist

BEFORE WORK STARTS

- Find trades, obtain quotes and inform them of your schedule
- **Check lead-in times for materials to avoid delays**
- Advise Building Control of commencement
- **Arrange/amend insurance**
- If living on site, put measures in place to keep the building work separate from your living spaces
- **Arrange toilet facilities for trades if necessary**

WEEK
1

PREPARATION WORKS

- Ensure clear access to site
- **Have bricks,**

blocks and associated materials delivered to site and stacked in place

- Hire mixer and digger — this is only necessary if you are project managing, otherwise your builders or contractors will organise this on your behalf
- **Ensure the site is safe, particularly if you have small children**

WEEK
2

GROUNDWORKS

- **Builders arrive on site**
- Groundworkers dig foundations

- **Building Control visit to approve the foundations**
- Reinforcement laid within foundations, if required
- **Pipework, drainage or services laid within foundations**
- Concrete footing poured and levelled
- **Building Control visits to approve**

WEEKS
3-4

SUPERSTRUCTURE

- Bricklayers to build up to damp-proof course
- **Drains installed**

and trenches dug for associated pipework

- Insert concrete lintels into brickwork if a drain run requires it
- **Sand is then laid before damp-proof membrane is put down**
- Insulation fitted
- **Concrete slab poured**
- Arrange for Building Control inspection

WEEK
5

EXTERNAL WALLS BUILT

- **Check that the required materials**

are on site for the superstructure to commence, including lintels, door and window frames and wall ties

- Whether the brickwork or blockwork is built first will depend on your builder, but work now starts on the superstructure
- **Cavity wall insulation fitted**
- Wall ties inserted to fix the new walls to the existing
- **Lintels for windows and doors fitted**
- Door and window frames should be inserted as the walls go up

WEEK
6

INTERNAL WALLS BUILT

- **Internal walls are constructed**
- Order materials

such as windows, roof tiles, etc., which can sometimes have long lead times of up to five weeks

- **Check that the carpenter is all set for the following week and all materials are ready — including lead**

WEEK
7

ROOF STRUCTURE

- The carpenter will start building the roof structure

— or in some cases prefabricated roof trusses may be used

- **If you are having rooflights, the carpenter is usually in charge of fitting these at this stage**
- Dormers will be constructed if they are being introduced

WEEK
8

ROOF COVERINGS

- **Roofing membrane is laid over**

the newly built rafters

- Roof battens cut and fitted over membrane
- **Tiles/slates laid**
- Ridge/hip tiles laid and bedded
- **Valley tiles laid, along with finishing details, flashings, etc.**
- Fascias, soffits and verges primed/stained/painted
- **Floor screed laid**

WEEKS
9-10

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- External rendering if required

- **Windows and doors fitted into linings and frames that were (hopefully) put in place when walls were being built**
- Guttering and downpipes fitted
- **First fix carpentry, plumbing and electrics**
- Studwork walls built, door linings fitted and pipes boxed in

Right: Superstructure

The trick with building extensions is to delay breaking through to the existing house to as late as possible in the build schedule. Here, existing bricks have been removed ready to take the new junction

WEEK 10

BREAKING THROUGH

⇒ Now is a good time to ensure you get sealed off from

the building work as things will get messy

⇒ Steels are put into place, along with padstones — sizes should have already been approved by Building Control

⇒ Joins made good

WEEK 11

PLASTERING

⇒ Walls are boarded, with insulation placed between battens on existing uninsulated external walls

⇒ Plastering — followed by a period of drying out (around a week before decorating can begin)

WEEK 12

SECOND FIX

⇒ Second fix electrics carried out (sockets made live,

switches put in place, lights fitted, etc.)

⇒ Second fix plumbing (taps, connections, etc.)

⇒ Flooring laid (sometimes people choose to lay flooring after the kitchen is fitted)

⇒ Kitchen units installed (if this is a kitchen extension)

WEEK 13

SNAGGING

⇒ Leaks, electrical problems, heating system issues, sticking

doors and windows — report them all to the relevant trades as soon as possible after finishing **H**



JEREMY PHILLIPS

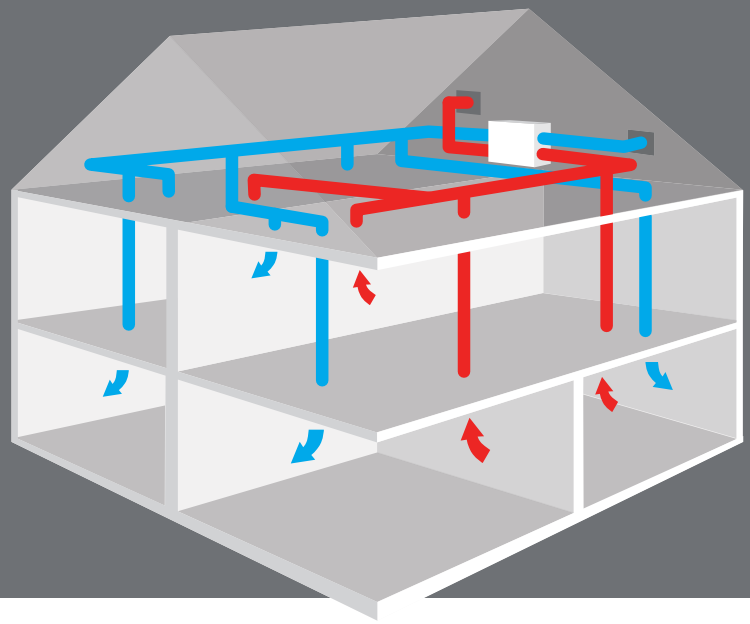
Extension Checklist

Make sure your project runs smoothly with our handy 'don't forget' checklist

- ⇒ Obtain planning permission, if required, prior to works commencing
- ⇒ Submit application to your local Building Control
- ⇒ Arrange access for delivery lorries and consider where skips can be placed
- ⇒ Get quotes from trades
- ⇒ If living on site, arrange schedules to minimise impact on day-to-day living
- ⇒ Agree timescales and schedules with trades to avoid delays on site
- ⇒ Arrange or amend insurances as necessary (you may need a new policy)
- ⇒ Inform neighbours of work commencing
- ⇒ Organise the hire of plant, toilets, etc.
- ⇒ Set up accounts with your local builders' merchants
- ⇒ Check lead-in times for materials and order where necessary
- ⇒ Notify Building Control that you are commencing works
- ⇒ Make space available to store materials safely on site
- ⇒ Make sure water will be available for cement mixer (and later plastering) where it will cause minimal mess inside
- ⇒ Arrange scaffolding if required
- ⇒ Make second fix decisions (such as the position of lights and sockets) as early as possible
- ⇒ Build in time for plaster to dry out before decorating commences
- ⇒ Make sure plasterers and other trades know if you are carrying out aspects of their jobs on a DIY basis

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Comparing Floor Structure Costs

Concrete slab, suspended timber or beam and block? All are viable choices for ground floor structures — David Snell compares the costs



DAVID SNELL

A 13-time self-builder, David has been building homes for 50 years and is the author of *Building Your Own Home*

For most self-builders and extenders, one of the most exciting times is when the ground floor is completed and they can, at last, see the footprint of their new home on site.

But there are choices to be made when it comes to the ground floor structure. To a large extent, suspended timber ground floors gave way to solid slab concrete floors throughout much the 20th century and then, from around 1976 onwards, following a prolonged period of drought with many foundation and oversite failures, suspended concrete beam and block floors started to gain prominence. Nevertheless, all three systems remain valid and fall within Building Regulations.

Today, the complicating factors when considering the costs of each system are the need to provide insulation and the requirement for underfloor heating. Undoubtedly, insulation is easier to provide with the solid slab and beam and block type of flooring as it simply becomes part of the construction sandwich. In timber suspended floors, its placement is more complicated, but there are many practicable solutions. With solid and beam and block floors, underfloor heating pipes can quite easily be accommodated within a screed. While that's possible with a timber floor – using some of the modern lightweight screeds – it's not at all common. The more usual method is to employ metal baffle plates beneath the decking, but this means that the insulation beneath needs to be completely consistent. All in all, if underfloor heating is going to be specified, it is probably best to veer away from a suspended timber ground floor.

While on paper the beam and block flooring system may appear to be the



most expensive option it is, nevertheless, a finite cost, whereas complications with infill and consolidation or varying site levels will have an impact on the other two systems. That, and the fact that one has a known and calculable item make this the most popular method with builders and authorities alike.

From the homeowner's point of view, the ground floor does offer a chance to save money by pitching in and undertaking all or part of the work. None of it is rocket science and, as long as the sequences and plans are followed, it is not beyond a competent and energetic person.

The following costs relate to a 120m² L-shaped oversite.

Suspended Timber Floor

Those with a Victorian home who have dared to look below the ground floor decking will notice that, in many cases, all that's below is dirt. That's not acceptable these days and the need for a solid concrete oversite is one of the main reasons for this type of flooring system falling out of favour. Additionally, as timber doesn't have the provable strength capacities of a concrete beam or slab, the spans will be less, creating a need for a greater number of supporting walls.

Ground floor joists can still be built into the superstructure walls, so long as they are carefully sealed with mastic ➡

"The ground floor does offer a chance to save money"

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ADVICE COSTS

but, these days, most people opt to support them with metal joist hangers. The timber doesn't always have to be treated (aside from built-in ends) but, at just 26p a metre extra, it makes sense to specify treated timber.

Insulation can be mineral wool suspended on netting or rigid foam supported on battens.



SUSPENDED TIMBER FLOOR COSTS

5 rolls of damp-proof course at £3.16 each	£15.80
2 rolls of polythene membrane.....	£75.46
28 air vents	£22.68
6m³ concrete oversite	£626.58
Labour for above (groundworkers plus 1 labourer) ..	£218.00
20m² honeycomb support walling blocks	£136.00
Labour and mortar	£270.00
Floor joists 300m, 195x47mm treated	£1,038.00
80 joist hangers @ £1.18 each	£94.40
600m battening	£186.00
44 sheets of 100mm insulation @ £32 each	£1,408.00
44 sheets of 50mm insulation @ £19 each	£836.00
Nails, etc.	£69.94
Moisture-resistant decking — 84 sheets @ £7.99 each	£671.16
Labour (carpenter x 2 for 4 days)	£1,280.00

TOTAL £6,948.02

Solid Slab Oversite

A solid slab oversite will usually be laid in bays within each ground floor room or area divided by the partition or buttress walling. It is, however, possible that the oversite can be formed to run over or independently of the partition walling.

SOLID SLAB OVERSITE COSTS

200mm consolidated hardcore	£120.00
Sand blinding	£32.00
Membrane	£75.46
44 sheets of 100mm insulation @ £32 each.....	£1,408.00
44 sheets of 50mm insulation @ £19 each	£836.00
Perimeter insulation	£100.37
6m³ concrete oversite	£626.58

Mesh reinforcement	£434.50
Labour for above (groundworker plus labourer for 4 days)	£872.00
Digger (2 days)	£432.00
Pre-mix screed (labour and materials)	£1,930.25

TOTAL £6,776.79

Beam and Block

A beam and block flooring system spans from external wall to external wall or from external wall to the partition or buttressing walls. Unlike the suspended timber flooring system, it is usual to leave the oversite as subsoil. The exception to this is where a Flood Risk Assessment recommends otherwise. In common with all of the methods, radon gas requirements mean that a membrane is necessary, tanked into the damp-proof course of the walling.

BEAM AND BLOCK FLOOR COSTS

Membrane.....	£75.46
28 remote void adaptor vents.....	£169.12
28 telescopic air vents.....	£92.68
28 air bricks	£22.68
Labour for above	£436.00
Floor beams by specialist manufacturer	£2,231.25
Crane (1 day)	£425.00
Floor blocks 112.9m²	£767.72
Labour for above (groundworker plus labourer for 9 days)	£1,090.00
Perimeter insulation	£18.72
44 sheets of 100mm insulation @ £32 each.....	£1,408.00
44 sheets of 50mm insulation @ £19 each	£836.00
Membrane	£37.73
Labour for above (1 day)	£218.00
Pre-mix screed labour and materials.....	£1,930.25

TOTAL £9,758.61 [Ⓜ]





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BUILD COSTS

➤ The Build Cost Calculator

A simple cost-estimating guide for people building their own home


One of the most important aspects when planning your self-build or home renovation/extension project is working out how much it is going to cost.

This figure will depend on the size and shape of the house, the level of your own involvement, where in the country you intend to build, and the materials you're going to use. If you can make even rough decisions about these factors, then you can begin to work out how much it is going to cost.

As a very general rule of thumb, expect a building plot to cost between a third and a half of the end value of the finished house. The costs of building a house will then depend on the variables listed above. All building work is usually quoted on a cost/m² basis. For example, a typical new four bedroom self-built home is around 200m² (with 100m² on two sto-

reys) and usually varies between £900-£1,500/m² (although self-builders achieve costs between £300-£3,000/m²).

Renovation costs are more difficult to establish as they involve many variables, but allow at least £1,000-£1,300/m² for work. This, added to the cost of the plot/house and with a 10-30 per cent contingency, should result in less than the final end value of the house.

The table below, based on information from the Build Cost Information Service (part of RICS), is updated monthly to help you work out a more accurate estimate (note, however, that these figures are for build costs only and do not account for VAT, which is not charged for self-build projects). There is an interactive online version at www.homebuilding.co.uk/calculator which guides you through the process. 

HOW TO USE THE TABLE

1. Identify your build route from the four options; 2. Identify your expected level of specification: 'standard', 'good' or 'excellent'; 3. Identify the estimated size of your finished house (either single or two/more storeys); 4. Choose your location; 5. Multiply the figure by your house size (the internal floor area).

		BUILD ROUTE A (DIY + Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE B (Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE C (Builder/Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE D (Main Contractor)		
		Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent
SINGLE STOREY													
>90m ²	Greater London	1212	1402	1687	1284	1485	1786	1355	1567	1885	1426	1650	1984
	South-East	1063	1230	1480	1126	1303	1567	1188	1375	1654	1251	1447	1741
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	967	1120	1346	1024	1185	1425	1080	1251	1504	1137	1317	1583
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	925	1070	1287	979	1133	1363	1033	1196	1438	1088	1259	1514
91-160m ²	Greater London	1110	1347	1750	1175	1426	1853	1241	1506	1956	1306	1585	2059
	South-East	974	1181	1535	1031	1250	1525	1088	1320	1715	1146	1389	1806
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	886	1075	1398	938	1138	1480	990	1202	1562	1042	1265	1644
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	848	1028	1336	897	1089	1415	947	1149	1493	997	1210	1572
161m ² +	Greater London	988	1297	1626	1047	1373	1722	1105	1449	1818	1163	1525	1913
	South-East	867	1136	1427	918	1203	1510	969	1270	1594	1020	1337	1678
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	789	1034	1299	835	1095	1375	881	1156	1452	928	1217	1528
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	754	990	1241	798	1048	1314	842	1106	1387	887	1164	1460
TWO STOREY													
90-130m ²	Greater London	1167	1350	1658	1235	1429	1755	1304	1508	1853	1372	1588	1950
	South-East	1023	1183	1454	1083	1253	1540	1144	1323	1625	1204	1392	1711
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	931	1077	1324	985	1141	1402	1040	1204	1480	1095	1268	1558
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	890	1030	1265	942	1091	1340	994	1152	1414	1047	1212	1489
131-220m ²	Greater London	982	1189	1508	1040	1259	1597	1098	1329	1686	1156	1399	1775
	South-East	862	1044	1323	913	1105	1401	963	1167	1479	1014	1228	1557
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	784	950	1204	830	1006	1275	876	1062	1345	922	1117	1416
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	750	908	1151	794	961	1219	838	1014	1286	882	1068	1354
221m ² +	Greater London	907	1161	1457	960	1229	1542	1013	1297	1628	1066	1365	1714
	South-East	796	1017	1278	843	1077	1354	889	1137	1429	936	1197	1504
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	724	926	1163	766	980	1231	809	1035	1300	851	1089	1368
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	692	885	1112	733	937	1178	774	989	1243	814	1041	1309

WANT MORE BUILD COST ADVICE?

Visit our interactive build cost calculator online: homebuilding.co.uk/calculator

GYPSOL anhydrite screed binder. The new name from an established manufacturer.

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Choosing Between SIPs Systems

Not all SIPs (structural insulated panels) systems are made in the same way. Tim Pullen explains the key differences between them and how these differences may influence your purchase



TIM PULLEN

An expert in sustainable building and energy efficiency, Tim runs the green home consultancy Weather Works

THE QUICK READ

➤ The key differences between SIPs systems is the material used for the core – this could be polyurethane (PUR), polyisocyanurate (PIR) or polystyrene (PS) insulation – and the method used to connect panel to panel

➤ Panels with a PUR core achieve the same U value over a thinner cross section than panels with a PS core

➤ Attention to detail and quality workmanship on site is key to ensuring a SIPs build remains airtight

The debate over which is the best construction system continues to rumble on, with no real prospect of agreement or resolution. However, even once you've opted for a particular system – be it masonry, timber frame, ICF (insulated concrete formwork) or structural insulated panels (SIPs), for instance – there are still choices and decisions to be made. Here, we look at SIPs in detail and explore the different options available.

What are SIPs?

Essentially a SIP is a panel consisting of a rigid foam insulating core bonded between two structural facings, typically oriented strand board (OSB) but this can also be plywood or metal. The bonding of the insulation to the facing

material creates a stress that allows the whole panel to withstand structural loads.

The idea of a foam core panel originated in the 1930s in Wisconsin, US, but did not really get going until the 1970s. Now there are millions of SIPs buildings around the world. However, we still tend to think of SIPs as a new, unproven technology, when the reality is that even such luminaries as Frank Lloyd Wright have successfully used SIPs.

How SIPs Differ

There are two distinct differences between different SIPs products: The insulation material which makes up the core and the method of connecting the panels. To be considered a genuine SIP the insulation can only be a rigid foam and therefore polyurethane (PUR), polyisocyanurate (PIR) or polystyrene (PS). The latter also comes in two forms: expanded (EPS) which is the white, bead-like form we are used to, or extruded (XPS) which tends to be colours other than white (grey and blue are more typical, but XPS can be orange or even green). There is another ongoing debate about which type of PS is best, but in terms of insulation quality there is really little to choose between the two. A paper entitled *The Way To Go* published by Harvard University in 2008 essentially suggested that polystyrene, on a global scale, is a negative thing from an environmental perspective; so maybe which is the best insulator is a bit of a moot point.

Just as important is the structural stability of SIPs, which comes from connecting panels. There are three options for connecting panel to panel: OSB thin-spline, mini-SIP spline and dimensional timber spline (see p.153). A paper published by Prathan Rungthongkit and Jian Yang at the School of Civil Engineering at the University of Birmingham (*Behaviour of Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs) Under Short-Term and Long-Term Loadings*) compares the three options. Laboratory testing shows that a dimensional timber spline (which consists of a 50x100mm softwood between joints) performs best in structural terms, i.e. it supports a greater load before failure and deflects less under loads.

Equally important is the quality of the team erecting the panels

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INSIGHT CHOOSING BETWEEN SIPS SYSTEMS

It's worth noting that there are also panels sometimes referred to as SIPs that use sustainable insulation materials — hemp, hemp lime, straw, etc. While using sustainable insulation may be a good thing, these panels need dimensional timber on all four sides and the insulation is not bonded to the sheet material being used as an infill. So these are, in fact, closed panel timber frame systems, not SIPs.

Key Issues

From a technical perspective, choosing between SIPs systems comes down to a decision on the insulation (PUR or PS) and the panel jointing method — these are, after all, the only features that really differentiate the various options. Here we look at the principal issues surrounding these two points:

● **COST** — None of the main suppliers will commit on this point. "Unfortunately it is very difficult to give you an idea of costs, as this is very much dependent on the complexity of the building design," says Andrew Porter of SIPs@Clays. Other suppliers say broadly the same.

In the same way that a SIPs system forms only a part of the cost of the build, the panels themselves are only a part of the cost of the system. Design, engineering, delivery, and erection will all be added to the cost, as will the charge rate and profitability of that supplier.

● **LONGEVITY** — Again, all the major players say a similar thing: they all work to a 60-year design life, but state that this is the minimum standard. There are a few buildings in the US dating from the 1930s and 1940s, but the technology only really got going in the 1970s, so we only have around a 40-year history to work with. That history shows that SIPs buildings continue to perform well, and that different systems or core insulation materials have no impact on the life of the building.

Having said that, it is recognised that SIPs do not perform well in flood situations; be that internally or externally caused. The sealed nature of a SIPs wall means that it takes a long time to dry out. This can lead to the OSB or plywood delaminating

(i.e. falling to bits), which tends to happen at low level and will have a serious impact on a panel's stability.

● **INSULATION QUALITY** — Here there is inarguable difference. PUR has an R value (this is a measure of thermal resistance) of 0.021W/mK, while the R value of PS is 0.035W/mK. What this means is that PUR transmits about 40 per cent less heat for a given thickness, so PUR SIPs can achieve the same U value in a wall with a thinner cross section. Constructing a wall with a U value of 0.2W/m² will make it around 212mm thick overall. Achieving the same U value with EPS will mean the wall will be 262mm thick. The question then is does that loss of 50mm internal floor space matter to you?

Wall thickness aside, there are other differences too. The insulation core of PUR panels is autohesively bonded to the OSB facings; this means that the PUR is injected in liquid form into the panel, where it expands. The panels are held at high pressure, making the PUR foam bond to the OSB. It is said that this provides better adhesion than the glues used in panels using PS as the core insulation.

It should also be noted that there is a geographical difference. PS is the insulation of choice across the US, where the use of PUR remains diminishingly small. This is perhaps a legacy issue: SIPs were developed in the country using PS, and when the technology began to take off there in the '70s and '80s, PS was virtually the only option. Similarly, PS has many adherents in the big German off-site house manufacturers, where it is used as the core insulation and as an external insulation. The sense there is that it works so don't change it. Conversely in the UK PUR is the big player, with the Kingspan TEK® Building System dominating the market.

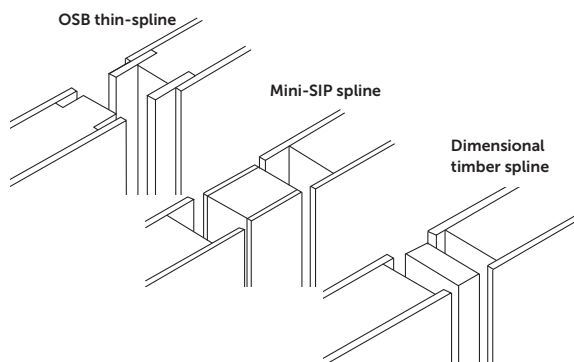
But the quality of insulation is not just about thermal conductivity, it is also about thermal bridges — said to account for 25 per cent of the heat escaping from a house — and airtightness. This strikes at the joints, so the jointing method and the competence of the erection team is key.

The best structural stability comes from a dimensional timber spline joint, but this can leave a thermal bridge. Mini-SIP joints overcome the thermal bridge issue, as do OSB thin-spline joints. However, in the long term, dimensional timber spline joints perform best as they deal with inherent panel creep (more on which later).

Relatively high levels of airtightness are available as standard with all SIPs systems but actually achieving this is reliant on the competence and diligence of the erection team. The best system available can be wrecked by sloppy on-site workmanship. Airtightness is, ultimately, a function of that team.

● **STRUCTURAL STABILITY** — In addition, airtightness is a function of structural stability; if the building moves it is likely to open cracks, impacting on airtightness. Independent testing shows that SIPs offer greater structural stability than equivalent timber frame systems. Obviously, structural stability is of paramount importance and the building's designer will ensure it continues to stand up, whatever construction method is used. Achieving it with SIPs should require less material and (notionally, at least) cost less than an equivalent timber frame.

But this is not the whole story. SIPs are subject to 'creep'. The bonding of the insulation core to the facing material puts ➔



Above: Jointing Methods

There are three methods of joining SIPs panels: the OSB thin-spline, the mini-SIP spline and dimensional timber spline



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stress on that facing. Over time that stress begins to release and the panels 'creep'. As the aforementioned Birmingham University paper suggests, this movement can be measured in millimetres, and dimensional timber spline joints perform best in this respect. The major impact of this is on insulation and airtightness and there is an argument that this really only applies to PUR systems due to the autohesivity (the bonding) of the core insulation.

● **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** — The manufacture and use of PS has been subject to a lot of regulation in recent years to eliminate the use of Ozone depleting and toxic gases in its manufacture, particularly in the UK and EU. Now, neither PS nor PUR use toxic or Ozone depleting gases; both use gases with low global warming potential.

In terms of recycling, EPS and PUR can be recycled but XPS cannot. Whether EPS or PUR actually are recycled is another question. One major UK SIPs manufacturer using EPS compresses the waste into solid, heavy blocks which are then shipped to China for 'recycling'. Whether this is motivated by environmental concerns or merely to meet EU regulations is still in question.

Making a Decision

So, in conclusion, the cost of the system itself will not make or break the deal. Longevity is a non-issue if the build is not in a flood plain. Insulation quality favours PUR but structural stability favours EPS. And so, there are pros and cons to weigh up between the different options. If any of these factors are important to you, then it's a good idea to do your homework; the finer detail regarding what a SIPs manufacturer and/or supplier offers is not always readily available on their marketing materials or website.

TRADA (Timber Research and Development Authority) suggest third-party certification – which means BBA approval – is a good idea. But over and above this, they suggest that the choice will be between cost and availability – the cheapest local supplier perhaps.

"In my own opinion, the competence of the supplier is more important than the type of insulation that forms the core," adds Andrew Porter of SIPs@Clays, who also recommends taking up references. Always good advice.

So, disappointingly perhaps, we arrive at a position where, technically at least, there is little to choose between the various SIPs options. The key is to find a good supplier at a reasonable price. Good-quality panels, good design and engineering goes almost without saying. But equally important is the quality and diligence of the team erecting the SIPs system – they have the ability to undo all the good work. Added to all this, doing a thorough credit check on the supplier is a very sensible idea. So too is asking whether the company have a client or escrow account, whereby the money is held in the account until an agreed point, and is kept separate from the company's business account. Money in a client/escrow account is safe from company insolvency. You will be handing over a large deposit and it will be good to have the assurance that they won't go bust before your house turns up on site. **H**



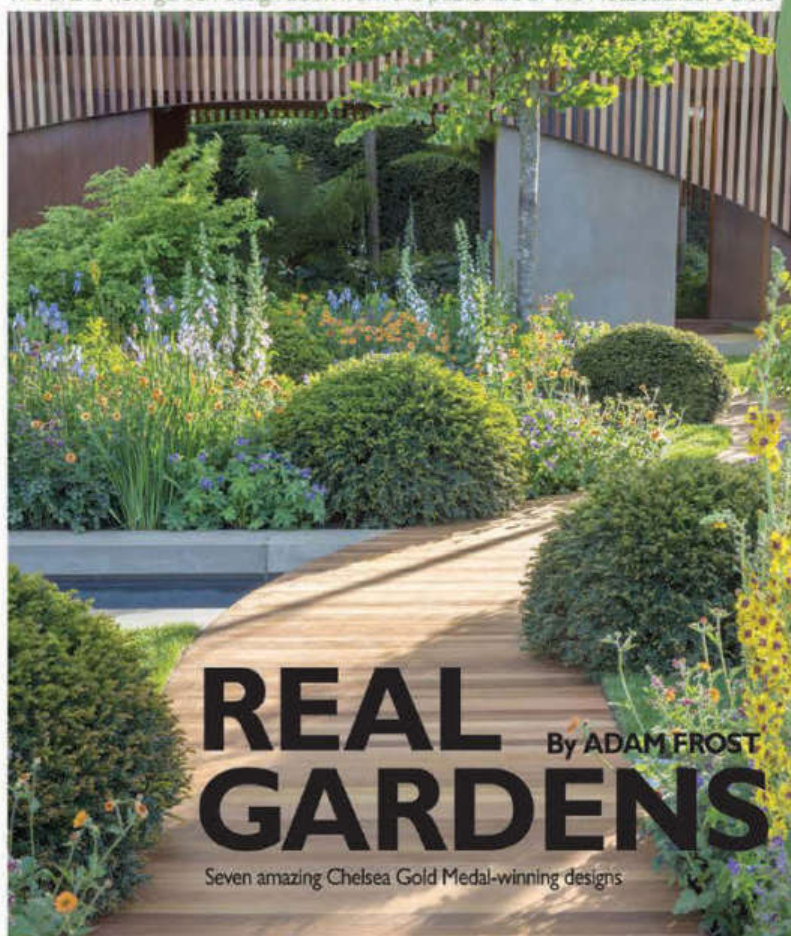
A SIPs Build

Wall thickness was a priority on this narrow site. The Kingspan TEK® Building System – sourced from SIPs@Clays, who provided the erection team – were specified by the self-builder behind this project; the PUR core gives this system a comparatively thinner cross profile



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Real Gardens tells the story of Adam's seven Chelsea gold medal-winning gardens. These are no mere show gardens, but are designs that can work in real life, whether you are designing a whole garden or simply updating. Packed with inspirational ideas, the book is beautifully illustrated with colour pictures and includes technical drawings for arbours, water features, walls and much more



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Toolkit

Planning a Bathroom



SIMON MAXWELL

This section: An in-depth design and building project guide. Edited by Claire Lloyd

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Bathrooms: Getting Started

They're one of the most important rooms in the house – and most homes have several – but bathrooms can be a challenge to get right

The average UK bathroom is around the size of a kingsize mattress, according to UK bathroom retailer Victoria Plum — measuring up at about 2x2m, or 4m². It's quite a statistic, and a little sobering considering the multitude of tasks undertaken in this room, and the daily use our bathrooms receive. These small spaces are increasingly under pressure to accommodate modern-day must-haves such as walk-in showers and freestanding baths, not to mention essentials like the toilet and basin. While solutions like wall-hung basins may add to the illusion of space, they're often paired with sizable vanity units. Plentiful storage is nothing if not a good thing, but again, bathroom furniture can take up valuable space.

"The most important tip I can share with you is to keep it simple and resist cramming too much in," says Hugo Tugman, co-founder of Architect Your Home and partner of Tugman Architects. "It's really important to think about the space. Many people seem to imagine that they can fill a tiny room with twin basins, WC, bath and shower, etc. leaving no space to even turn around, let alone dry yourself."

It perhaps goes without saying that building a new home presents an unrivalled opportunity to get new bathrooms and cloakrooms just how you want them. But new bathrooms need planning at an early stage of a self-build; ideally prior to the building work starting on site.

"With a new build there is a good degree of flexibility as to where you can site the plumbing and waste," says Jim Gettings of J&S House of Design. "However, it's important to catch the design early. The window placement may look aesthetically pleasing from the exterior, but might not necessarily work well with the homeowner's desired bathroom layout. Again, door positions and ceiling heights can also impact on the layout. If you catch the plans early enough you can make these changes. But some self-builders do not approach a bathroom designer until the build is well under way, and can then end up facing the same challenges as those taking on a renovation project."

It's a good idea to buy your bathroom early on too. "To ensure the hot and cold pipes and waste are in the correct positions, you need to choose all sanitaryware, taps and showers before plastering and tiling. Specify everything before first fix stage, as leaving key decisions until the later stages of a project can mean expensive alterations," adds Michael Holmes, *Homebuilding & Renovating's* Content Director and property expert.

Remodelling an Existing Bathroom

Updating or remodelling a bathroom in an existing home can be one of the most rewarding projects during a renovation — not to mention, add value to a property. But taking on a project of this nature is not without its challenges. "There are more parameters to work within when it comes to existing bathrooms. Work always tends to impact on another room; whether it's a bedroom to the side (perhaps knocking through to create a larger bathroom, for instance), or the plumbing impacting on the kitchen or room below," says Jim Gettings.

Changing the layout of an existing bathroom can have cost implications. "Avoid making unnecessary changes to your existing sanitaryware layout — the fewer alterations you make, the lower your plumbing costs will be," advises Michael Holmes. "If you do need to move some key elements, then at least keep the toilet close enough to connect to the existing soil pipe."

Moving a soil pipe can be a costly exercise; although the cost will depend on the house and whether the pipe is external or internal. "That said, if you're spending £5,000-£20,000 on a bathroom, you may argue that spending money on moving the soil pipe is better than compromising on your favoured design and layout," says Jim Gettings.

Updating or adding a new bathroom may also pose a particular challenge in older homes. On occasion, the floor may need bracing to support the weight of a filled bath for instance. A new shower enclosure may need to be placed on a riser kit (to accommodate plumbing of an adequate fall); this might be fine for rooms with high ceilings, but could be problematic for rooms with low ceilings. What may, on the surface, seem like a relatively straightforward project can be more complex and require more work (and budget) than first anticipated.

Your existing heating and hot water system could impact on your choice of shower, too. "If you want a power shower or a large showerhead and mixer taps, you need very good water pressure. Upgrade to a high-output combi boiler, or a conventional boiler and a large unvented hot water cylinder. If local mains pressure is below three bar you'll need a gravity-fed system, but can add pumps to improve pressure," advises Michael Holmes.

If you're adding a new bathroom to a property then do check if the existing hot water and heating system is able to cope with the additional demand placed upon it. Electric showers can be a good solution in this instance — they heat up water from the cold water feed, rather than drawing on the hot water supply. ➡



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Timeless Bathrooms

1: Mereway Bathrooms' fitted Sargasso Pumice bathroom range; **2:** This shower room, designed by TG Studio, features Segura limestone floor and wall tiles from Stonell and a bespoke frameless shower screen by Majestic; **3:** Drummonds' Naver single vanity basin, £2,394, with The Dalby Shower with Straight Pipe and 300mm Rose, £2,700, and The Eden Low Level WC Suite and Hexagonal Handle, £1,776; **4:** Aqata's Exclusive Solutions ES300 Sliding Door Recess Option measures 1,200mm and comes with ClearShield ECO-GLASS protection as standard, £1,298. The Linneal LNW206 Shower costs £506; **5:** Topps Tiles' Misty White Mix Mosaic cost £42.93/m² and are perfect for creating an illusion of space



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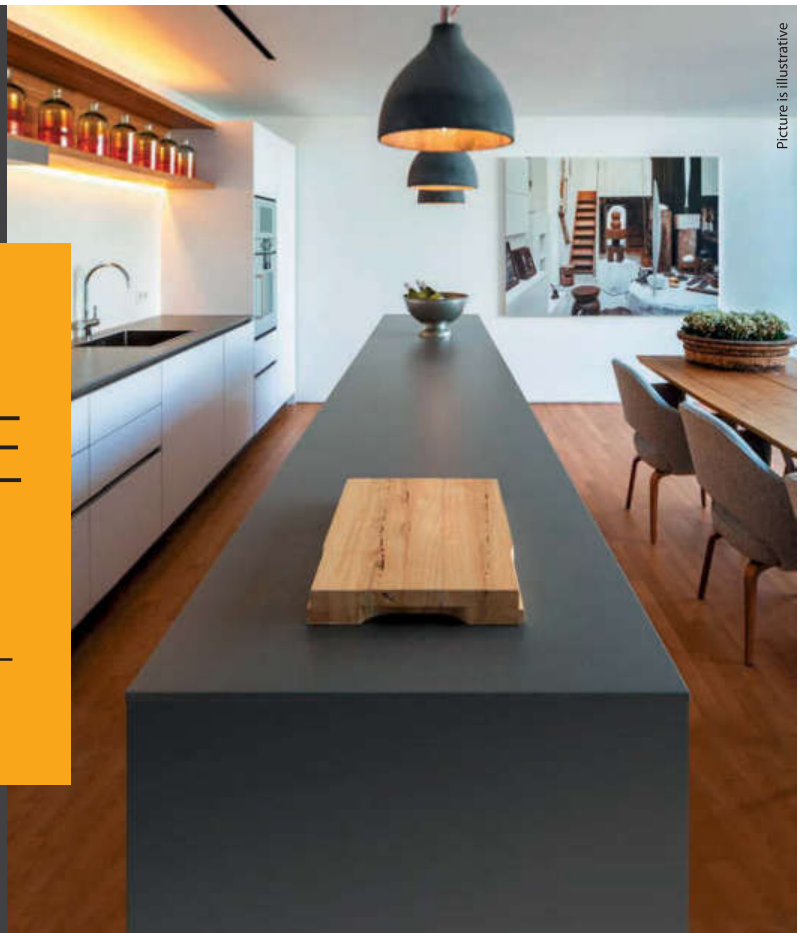
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PLANNING A BATHROOM A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

1: The Bloomsbury furniture collection from BAGNODE-SIGN is made from marine ply, with a rich ebony veneer. From £4,667; **2:** Duravit's Cape Cod floorstanding vanity unit shown in White High Gloss with square wash bowl, and freestanding bathtub made from DuraSolid A; **3:** IKEA's GODMORGON range; **4:** Heritage Bathroom's Hylton Freestanding acrylic bath, £2,550, and Chrome Victoria Double Console Basin and Legs, £1,045; **5:** The Bette Starlet Double-Ended Bath, £992, with Rosco Novocento Basin with Chrome Washstand, £1,794, Rosco Novocento WC Semi Back To Wall Completed, £551 — available at Alternative Bathroom



Planning the Space

For those limited on space, one of the first decisions is whether to opt for a bath, shower or shower bath. "If you are a family of shower-heads, only put in a bath if you are thinking of resale and there will be no bath in the house. Small kids need a bath and many people in the market love to have the option, but if you are not thinking of selling, design it for you," advises Architect Your Home's Hugo Tugman.

Sketching a scaled floorplan is an obvious starting point in helping to establish what you can and can't fit within the room. You should also factor in adequate circulation space into the floorplan. "The standard rule of thumb is nothing should be fitted within approximately 15 inches from the centre of the WC. For example, the wall to the centre of the toilet cannot be within 15 inches, same as a basin cannot be within 15 inches," says Louisa Bradshaw at Better Bathrooms.

There are arguably some elements of the bathroom where you should be aiming for minimum sizes too — the shower enclosure being a prime example. Large rectangular enclosures, which emulate the wetroom feel, are popular at present. But if you're opting for a square enclosure choose a minimum of 800x800mm — enclosures measuring 600x600mm may be space-savers but are simply too tight to feel accommodating.

Your choice of showerhead could also impact on the enclosure size. "A deluge rose showerhead creates a luxurious and stylish finish and offers a powerful performance, but do consider whether your shower enclosure or bath is large enough to contain the rainfall as the size of the showerhead means a large area will be prone to splashing," explains Georgina Spencer of Roca Group (UK).

"If opting for a shower enclosure, also consider carefully the type of door opening," adds Jayne Barnes, Managing Director of Aqata. "Think about the amount of space you require in the bathroom to move around comfortably. There are numerous options available including sliding, hinged, bi-fold, pivot, double and single doors. If floor space is limited, consider inward opening or sliding doors to maximise the available floor space."





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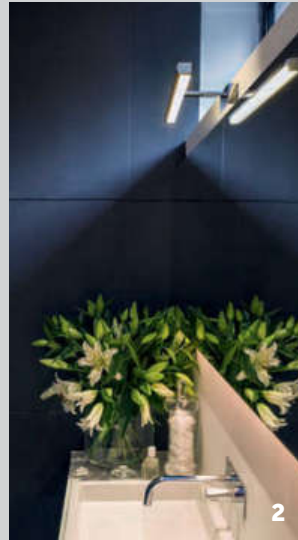
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PLANNING A BATHROOM A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



Lighting is another important, but often overlooked, design consideration — you can have a room boasting high-end sanitaryware and stunning bathroom furniture, but if there's inadequate light by which to put your makeup on, or to shave, your new bathroom can end up feeling like a damp squib. "Lighting is paramount to creating the right ambience when planning your bathroom, especially as the space is often small and lacking in natural light," say the experts at Poole Lighting. "Use any natural light available to your best advantage by using cleverly placed bathroom mirrors to reflect the light. You can also use bathroom lighting to reflect on shiny surfaces and shower screens to help illuminate your room."

The other key point here is IP rating. This denotes a light fitting's water resistance, and the IP rating required will depend on the 'zone' in which the light is to be fitted. Under Building Regulations, the bathroom is divided into zones; Zone 0 is the area within the bath, for example.

On the subject of regs, under The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Water Byelaws your bathroom should be designed so as to prevent contamination by backflow (whereby fluids travel in the opposite direction — an issue if drinking water is contaminated with grey or black water). This means the shower hose should not be able to reach into the toilet bowl. (There are more details available at wras.co.uk.) This is not always easily achieved in a compact bathroom. Reconfiguring the layout or, alternatively, a short shower hose may be the solution.

Different Routes to Achieving a Bathroom

There are several ways to achieving a new bathroom. You could plan your new bathroom yourself (perhaps with the aid of your architect or house designer). A number of bathroom manufacturers and suppliers offer online tools which can prove useful during the space planning stages. From here you may opt to buy the sanitaryware, tiles, brassware, etc., and project manage the different trades (plumber, electrician, tiler, plasterer) directly. This route provides flexibility to choose all the elements of the bathroom yourself, and to take on some tasks on a DIY basis if you so wish. ➔



- 1:** Laufen's designer IlBagno Alessi One collection — the freestanding acrylic bath costs £5,181; **2:** The Astro Kashima LED is IP44 rated, suitable for bathroom zones 2 and 3. It costs £180; **3:** Bushboard's Nuance laminate wall panelling in Ivory Marble is 100 per cent waterproof and costs £70/m²; **4:** LVT (luxury vinyl tile) is a good choice for bathrooms — Karndean Designflooring's Da Vinci Wood RP98 Limed Linen Oak, from £41.99/m², shown; **5:** HSK Renodeco Shower Panel System from Frontline Bathrooms; **6:** Victoria Plum's Demar Close Coupled Toilet including Soft Close Seat, £149, together with Brooklyn 1TH Basin & Pedestal, £89.99

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PLANNING A BATHROOM

Timeless Style

Cleverly done, traditional shapes – the rolltop bath for instance (Drummonds' Humber bath, from £3,210, in a hand-painted finish) – can be paired with modern elements (the vanity unit) for a timeless look. The deep grey palette lends warmth

Approaching one of the DIY sheds is another option; many offer design consultations, or a design and install service. Do bear in mind though that you will be limited to choosing from the products they have to offer.

There are also specialist bathroom companies who provide a complete design and install solution; a very good idea for those who prefer to be hands-off. "We provide a 'one-stop shop' and coordinate between a team of trades, which can otherwise be a bit of a juggling act for homeowners," explains Jim Gettings. The knowledge and experience of such companies often comes into its own when addressing the design and practical challenges presented by existing bathrooms. Plus, they'll often come up with ideas and solutions which you may not have otherwise thought of.

It's worth noting here that labour makes up a significant portion of the cost of a new bathroom. "We would advise that you should set aside a budget of £2,500–£5,000 for labour costs as it will depend on the products that you are wanting to install and your current plumbing set up," say Beatrice Pardo from BathroomTakeaway.co.uk and Maxine Brady from Welovehomeblog.com.

The Rise of Bathroom Furniture

The bathroom is no longer just a functional space, but increasingly being seen as an integral part of the interior, with storage and the display of wares being a particular focus. One trend which sees no sign of abating is bathroom furniture. "The style of furniture very much takes its lead from the kitchen," says Jim Gettings. "We're seeing drawer organisers, soft-close systems, gloss finishes and wood grains in the bathroom."

"Over the past few years, we have seen furniture become one of the strongest growth areas for bathrooms," adds Martin Carroll, Managing Director of Duravit UK, who have been promoting the concept of the 'living bathroom' for a good number of years. "Wall-hung furniture continues to be on trend due to its light, contemporary style which gives the room a feeling of space. However, modern floorstanding units on elegant feet make an

ideal alternative to wall-hung furniture and create a similar spacious look in the bathroom.

"The trend for a combination of open and closed storage within the vanity unit is an attractive design concept and also a very useful option because you can hide away some items and then others, that you need to have to hand, are very easily accessible," adds Martin Carroll.

Bathroom Budget-Saving Tips

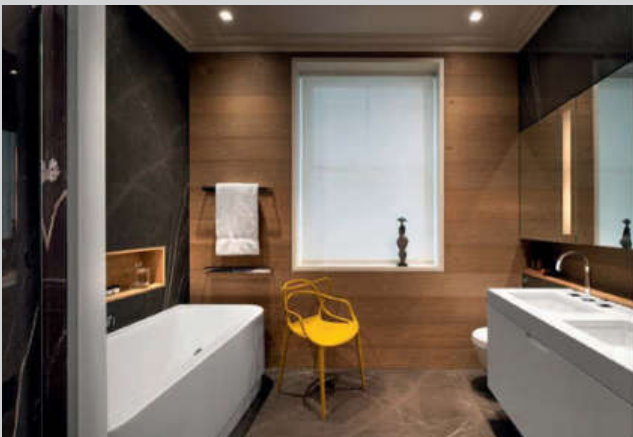
Creating a new bathroom to budget is not all about specifying the cheapest items possible, it's about knowing where to spend, and where to save. Michael Holmes, property expert and Content Director for *Homebuilding & Renovating*, offers his top tips:

- "Minimising wastage by measuring quantities very carefully, for items such as tiles, can help to keep costs down. However, don't cut it so fine that you run short, as this could prove a false economy if you incur disproportionate delivery charges for small additional orders or, worse still, find the product is no longer available. A few spare tiles are useful to have for repairs anyway.
- "Ditch wall-mounted fittings. Wall-mounted taps, basins and toilets often require specialist fixings, chasing out to house plumbing, and the concealment of cisterns. It's quicker and cheaper to fit deck-mounted taps, pedestal basins and close-coupled WCs.
- "Doing the work yourself can save you a fortune in labour costs, but can also be a false economy if it is not well executed. Only take on those tasks that you have the time and skill to complete to a professional standard.
- "Stick with white, and mix items of sanitaryware from different suppliers, in order to offset affordable buys against luxuries such as a quality bath. Also avoid cheap fixes, such as plastic baths or shower trays that are so thin they are flexible and, therefore, difficult to seal and make watertight," says Michael. Cheap taps can be another false economy. The surface of very cheapest chrome-plated models can tarnish and even begin to peel within a couple of years. **H**

PLANNING A BATHROOM

Get the Look

Achingly stylish wetrooms, wall-hung sanitaryware and timber cladding are popular ways of injecting boutique hotel chic. But there's more to recreating these features in your own bathroom than meets the eye



Timber Cladding

Introducing timber cladding in the bathroom is a particularly popular trend at present, but recreating this look is not without its challenges, as Thomas Griem, director of TG Studio, explains: "In humid bathrooms with a shower or bath, timber should only be used sparingly in areas that will have no contact with water. The cloakroom, however, is a special bathroom without excessive production of vapours — it therefore can be treated differently, with timber used throughout. My advice is to clad the entire room including the ceiling and door in timber boards. To make the door look like part of the panelling one needs to use SOSS hinges and no architrave internally.

"Generally it is best to use a hardwood and in the past we have even used oak," concludes Thomas, "and always ensure very good air extraction."



Wall-hung Sanitaryware

"Whether you're looking to have a WC, washbasin or both wall-hung, the process is relatively simple," explains Geberit's Marketing Director, Raffaella De Vittorio. "Essentially, a frame is fitted behind the wall to support the sanitaryware. This will incorporate a cistern and all of the pipework, meaning that once the wall is plastered or tiled, all that is visible is the sanitaryware itself and the WC flush plate. The plumbing work can be easily accessed via the flush plate should maintenance be needed, so the décor will never be harmed. Some framing systems, such as Geberit's Duofix, can be fitted securely to even a stud wall, making wall-hung sanitaryware a viable option in practically any bathroom.

"There's no need to completely remodel the entire bathroom in order to fit wall-hung sanitaryware, but it's



important to be aware that the wall it is being fitted into will need to be decorated once the work's complete.

"There are solutions available though that have been designed specifically to make retrofitting wall-hung products a lot easier. For example, the Geberit Monolith sanitary module conceals all the fixtures and fittings behind an elegant, slimline glass surface and uses existing plumbing work, with no chiselling or retiling needed.

"Most framing systems are designed to be simple to fit, so it can be tempting to do as a DIY task to keep costs down. However, it's always advisable to leave such things up to qualified installers, to ensure the system behind the wall is fitted properly. This will avoid having to strip back the décor and costly bills to rectify mistakes later on all because of a poorly fitted system."

PLANNING A BATHROOM BEHIND THE LOOK

Timeless Style

This remodelled and extended home – the scheme was designed by architectural practice AR Design Studio – features a new bathroom with walk-in shower with a large ceiling-mounted showerhead and shower screen to prevent splashing



MARTIN GARDNER C/O AR DESIGN

Wetrooms and Walk-in Showers

Wetrooms and walk-in showers not only look great, but with level thresholds are also a stylish and accessible showering solution. However, they can be difficult to get right. James Clark, Managing Director of wetroom manufacturer On The Level, offers his top tips for getting them right:

- "The minimum space needed for a wetroom is around 1m² and a simple walk-in glass screen can be added to stop spray splashing out into the bathroom. A wetroom can be created in quite a small space, but the entire room should be tanked (waterproofed). (I would recommend that the entire room is tanked anyway during installation for peace of mind.)
- "A wetroom does not need to be square or oblong like a standard shower tray – it can be rounded or angled in any way you want it to be to create a unique shower area. If you do have an odd-shaped space you can have a bespoke underfloor tray made to accommodate the shape.
- "A wetroom is suited to many types of floor construction – TJI joists, cassette, block and beam, timber floors, concrete and floating floors – on any level, ground floor or otherwise. There are few occasions when it will not be possible to create a wetroom.
- "Give consideration to the tiles that are chosen for the floor. The tiles need to be suited for use on a wet floor – you don't want slippery ones which are highly glazed or shiny. Look for quality porcelain tiles with anti-slip texture and remember to get advice

from your tile retailer when choosing floor tiles. Porcelain tiles are much tougher than ceramic so they are a good choice. If you are keen on a natural stone floor it can be sandblasted to add grip.

- "Make sure that the flow rate of water coming from the shower will not exceed the capacity of the gully.
- "Think about the position of the gully so that you avoid standing on the grating when showering, as this could be uncomfortable. Alternatively, choose a gully that is positioned in the wall at floor level to create a completely smooth shower area.
- "Think about underfloor heating (UFH). There are some systems available which you can use under wet floors (i.e. UFH up to 150W or 200W, although some manufacturers recommend UFH systems which do not exceed 100W). These can be used inside and outside the shower area. There are certain UFH systems which will damage tanking membranes which can cause big problems, so be careful when purchasing UFH systems. If you have any queries, I would suggest contacting a professional. On The Level has a knowledgeable advice line, plus helpful installation videos on the website.
- "Consider what style of shower fitting will work best for you. The wonderful thing about a wetroom is that the space brings the freedom to choose a combination of showers and you can really go to town with body jets, a luxurious fixed overhead and a hand-held shower. You are not restricted by space and practicalities as you are with an over-bath shower or a small enclosure." **H**

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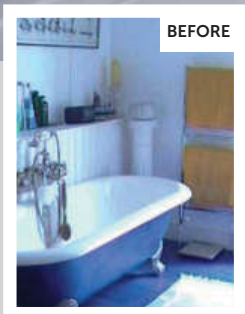
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A Luxury Bathroom

This remodelled family bathroom features a bath from Cleargreen Baths, made from 30 per cent recycled fibreglass, a large shower enclosure from Rhooper Rhodes, and vanity unit from bathroomand.co.uk. Cubica tiles in silver from Porcelanosa and Amtico's Signature flooring in Black Chestnut finish off the room



BEFORE

Space Reimagined

A dated family bathroom is transformed thanks to a remodel

As an interior decorator, the homeowner behind this project, Janet Littlewood, is used to creating interiors with wow-factor. So, when she set about redesigning her family's dated bathroom, she had a vision for how the new space would look. "It had to feel modern and contemporary without being cold or too minimal," says Janet. Sketching several different layouts before settling on a final design, she made sure everything in the bathroom had its own space and didn't feel crowded. "We are lucky that all the rooms in the house have great proportions, so we weren't restricted by their size," she says. "This made the design process really easy as we didn't have to shoehorn in the fittings around each other."

Janet was also keen to use British suppliers where possible. Research led her to Somerset-based Roper Rhodes, who supplied the shower. "I've always loved the

idea of a wetroom or a walk-in shower, but in reality I find that they don't work well with children, so we opted instead for a shower cubicle within the space," she says.

The tile and flooring choices were just as important as the sanitaryware. "I didn't want to cover every surface with tiles as I feel it closes the room in and can make it feel smaller than it is," Janet explains. Luxury vinyl tiles were chosen for the flooring. "With a busy family to accommodate, choosing practical flooring was essential, and I wanted a warm colour to offset the cool, contemporary feel of the bathroom."

The remodel took just two weeks, and cost around £6,000. "Finding the right builder was so important as it can make such a difference to the overall finish," continues Janet. Acting as project manager, she worked alongside them to organise the refit.

"I'm so pleased that I took my time over designing the space with everyone's needs in mind," concludes Janet. **H**



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Adding an extension can be the biggest financial investment you'll make after purchasing your home, so why risk it all by not having the right insurance in place? Ask yourself if you could afford to rebuild your home and extension out of your own pocket if something went wrong. If the answer is no, then providers such as Self-Build Zone and Build-Zone can help to ensure your site is covered during and after the build.

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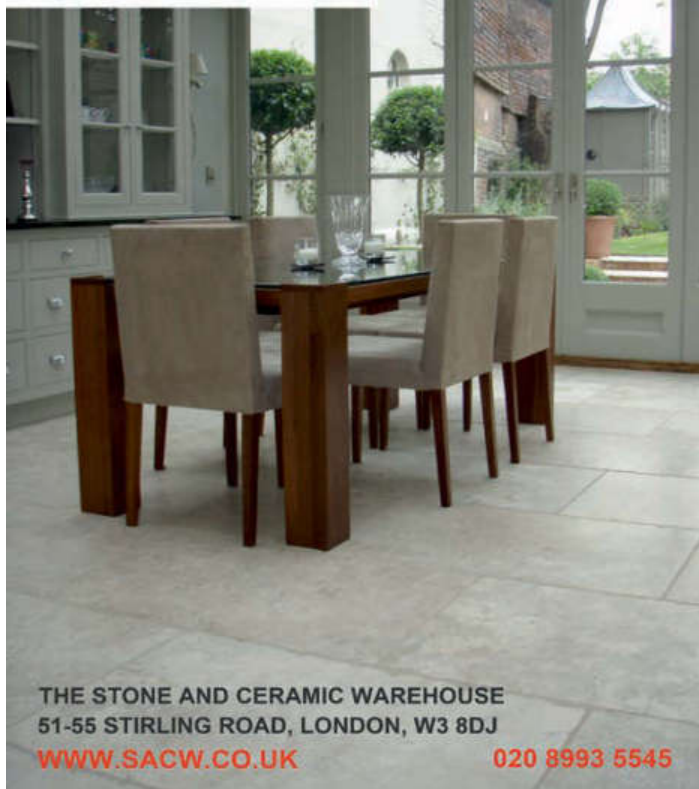


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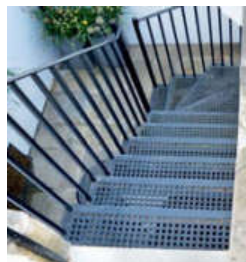


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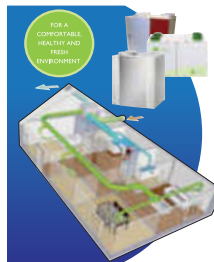


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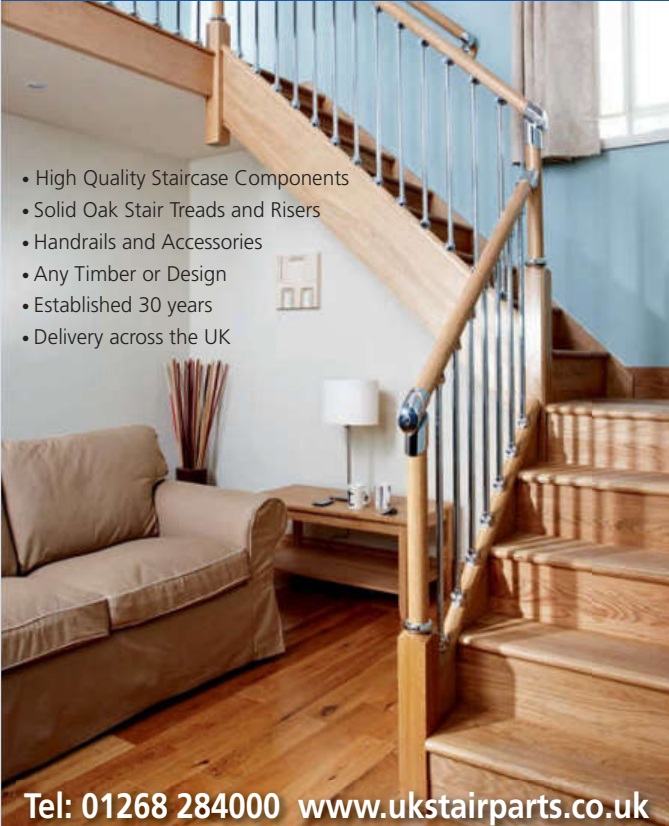
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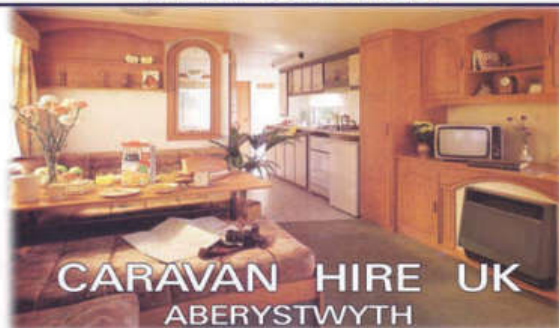
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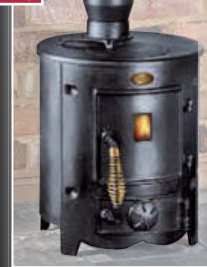
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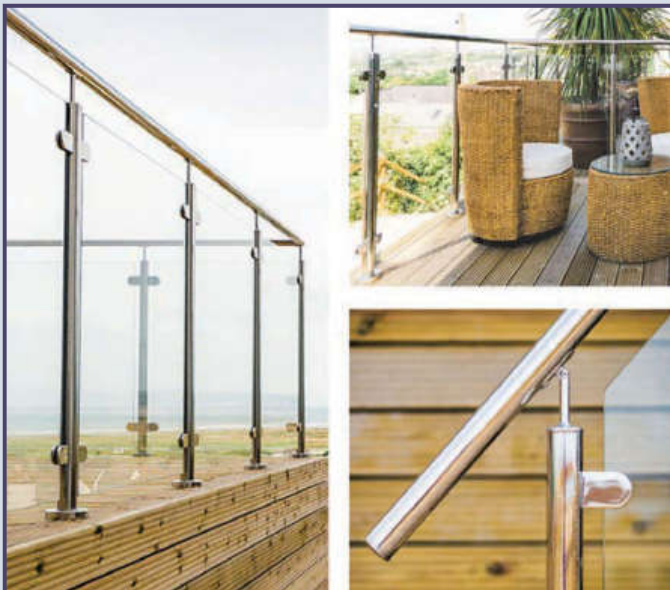
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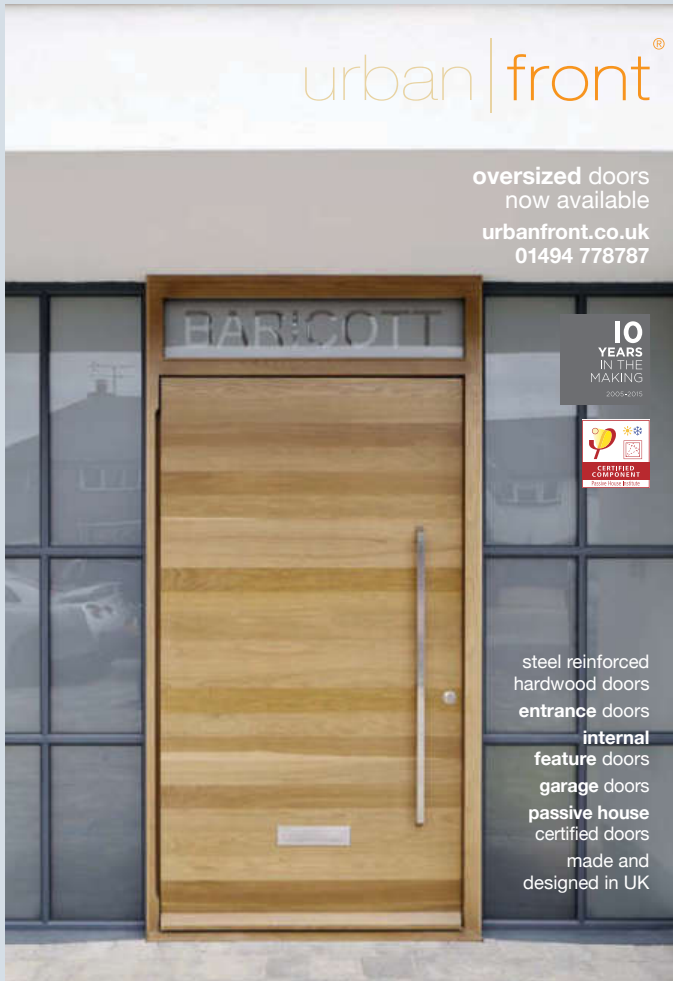
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3 Hansgrohe's new kitchen mixer Metris Select combines a pull-out spray head with Select technology. Temperature and water volume are set via the lever handle, then water flow is switched on or off by pressing the Select button on the top of the pull-out spray head. www.hansgrohe.co.uk

4 First launched 23 years ago, demista™ heated mirror pads have been sold to hotels, specifiers, architects, house builders, and supplied through electrical wholesalers and bathroom retailers. The self-adhesive pads are slimline and easy to install, simply fix in position and wire in to the electrical system either through the lighting or a separate switch.

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5 Saint-Gobain Weber's weber.pral M monocouche render has been specified for a substantial new build private home in Radstock, Bath. The property features many traditional design details including locally sourced stone for plinth courses, quoins, cills and copings Together with the clean crisp lines created by weber.pral M render an attractive aesthetic has been created for this exceptional home. www.netweber.co.uk

6 AeroTherm is a revolutionary new alternative to conventional insulation. The advanced technology behind AeroTherm creates up to 35% energy savings from a 1mm internal wall coating. This ultra-thin reflective coating creates warm walls, eliminates cold spots, reduces mould and provides wall to wall 'thermal comfort'. See us at stand B415 at the Harrogate Show. www.aerotherm.co.com

7 P3 Comforts is a complete bathroom range. A characteristic feature of the design is the raised tap platform on the basin which separates the wet and dry areas providing generous space for storing bathroom essentials. www.duravit.co.uk

8 The new Spectra SP462 Double Door Recess option from Aqata features hinged inward opening doors allowing easy access to the shower. Characterized by 8mm toughened clear glass and polished chrome finish profiles, it offers a simple and practical solution allowing a maximum showering area where space is limited. www.aqata.co.uk



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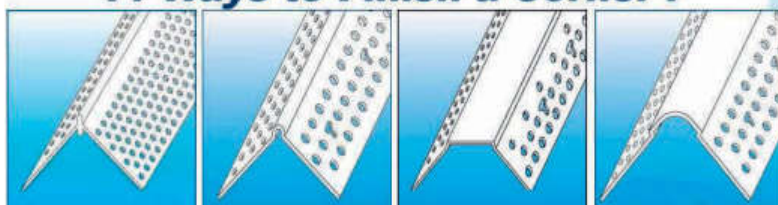
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PAD STUDIO

The External Room

Architect Darren Bray shares one of his practice's favourite design tricks

Creating contextual spaces is always at the forefront of what we do at PAD Studio. In the 21st century we are surrounded by devices that connect us to a digital, social world, and while these are immensely helpful, there are times when we need to switch off and experience the real world around us.

At PAD Studio the landscape is just as important as the architecture and interiors, so the external room is employed as a way of creating a space that can be experienced as an extension of the interior.

The external room can take on many different forms within a house. It can simply be extending a floor finish into the garden or courtyard, or a beautiful concrete

wall from inside to out (as shown above). Framing a view with carefully placed glazing, incorporating a window seat and creating a secret snug retreat space will also draw the long, distant views toward and within the house, generating a greater home

experience — no matter what form the external room takes, the key design element is to blur the boundaries of interior architecture and landscape.

The landscape ultimately allows you to see through and beyond what might be a small space internally. By designing in an external room you can create a number of experiences, extending the depth within a dwelling that otherwise might be challenged on floor area due to budget constraints. Never underestimate the power of nature and the external room. **H**



Darren Bray is Associate Director at award-winning practice PAD Studio
(padstudio.co.uk)



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